No-3154 Interview V-IV

President of Pakistan
GENERAL
MOHAMMAD ZIA-UL-HAQ

Interviews to Foreign Media

Vol. IV

January - December 1981

No. 3154

President of Pakistan
GENERAL
MOHAMMAD ZIA-UL-HAQ

Interviews to Foreign Media

Vol. IV

January - December 1981

MASOOD FAISAL JHANDIR LIBRARY
Acc No: 036572
★ MAILSI ★

TECHNICAL SUPPORT BY
CHUGHTAI
PUBLIC LIBRARY

FOREWORD

The present volume is the fourth in the series comprising the interviews granted by the President of Pakistan, General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, to foreign press/media representatives. The volume covers the period from January to December 1981.

The volume contains twenty nine interviews. Each interview is preceded by a short biodata of the interviewer except where the interview has been recorded by a media team.

CONTENTS

HASSAN KALEEMI

Hassan Kaleemi, a national of Pakistan, has been working as the Islamabad correspondent of the Saudi Press Agency since 1973. He interviewed the President of Pakistan on 7 January 1981 on behalf of the agency.

Prior to joining the Saudi Press News Agency Kaleemi, who holds Master's degree in journalism, worked for a number of newspapers in Pakistan. He was a regular columnist of 'Dawn' from 1966 to 1972. He was the editor of 'Muslim News' Karachi from 1965 to 1967.

INTERVIEW TO HASSAN KALEEMI SAUDI PRESS AGENCY

7-1-1981

Interviewer: Your Excellency, what prospects, in your view, does the forthcoming Islamic Summit hold to further promote Islamic unity?

President: In my opinion, the third Islamic Summit, which is being held in Saudi Arabia, has very good prospects of promoting Islamic unity; and I can say this on the basis of my experience as Chairman of the current Summit. The mere fact that it is being held in Saudi Arabia, and will be attended by the majority, if not all, of the heads of the Islamic countries, will contribute to the development of a true, collective perspective by the Islamic Ummah. I am not only hopeful but very optimistic that the Summit would be successful and bring forth some positive and concrete results, *Insha' Allah.*

Q: Excellency, the third Islamic Summit is being held under the shadows of the House of God in Makkah. Do you think that this fact would add some new spiritual dimensions to it, ensuring greater enthusiasm and sincerity on the part of leaders of the Ummah to come closer?

A: Very certainly. Not only the spiritual dimensions, but the blessings of Allah as well. After having assembled in *Khana-e-Kaaba*, I hope we will perform *Umrah* together, *Insha Allah.* This, I am sure, will, at least,

infuse in us that much of sincerity of purpose which results from the spiritual impact of such a sacred ritual. It is not for the first time; but I have been saying it all along that we should have our *Kaaba* not only from the religious point of view, but also from the political viewpoint. In my opinion – and I say it very frankly – *Khadim-e-Harmen Sharifen* should not only be the custodian of the House of God, but also provide political leadership to the Muslim Ummah.

Q : With a single leadership from the Holy Land?

A : Yes, with a single leadership; and let it be from the Holy Land, rather than from anywhere else.

Q : Sir, you happened to be the current Chairman of the Islamic Summit Conference. In this capacity, how do you evaluate the work done so far in the field of Islamic solidarity? Would you please make just a survey – I mean, how do you see it?

A : I would say that there has been a marked improvement in the unity of the Muslim world. I personally take no credit for this. I think there has been a tremendous realisation of Islamic values and the resurgence of Islam, and even those Muslim countries – with due apologies to the ones who, knowing full well that they are Islamic, still like to call themselves secular states. . . .

Q : Secular or Socialist, unfortunately?

A : Secular or Socialist. As I was saying, even in these countries, having their affiliation with the Muslim

world, there is a tremendous realisation of Islamic values. So, the overall effect of the Islamic Conference, eversince it was convened under peculiar circumstances. . . .

Q: After the burning of Al-Aqsa in 1969.

A: Yes, after the burning of Al-Aqsa. However, eversince then there have been a number of Islamic Conferences, Foreign Ministers' Conferences, and two Summits, which have given a feeling of belonging to the Muslim countries, and heightened their sense of unity and their awareness of the resurgence of Islam. This, I think, is a very positive contribution of the Islamic Conference as a whole.

Q: What are Your Excellency's perceptions about threats and dangers faced by the Muslim Ummah in general, and by the South Asian and Arabian Gulf regions, today, in particular?

A: I think the main threat to the Islamic Ummah is from the non-Muslim countries in which the Super Powers – the Soviet Union as well as the United States – occupy the foremost position, followed by the non-Muslim Western world. These countries, somehow or the other, view Islam with apprehension, instead of looking at its positive side, which I explained very clearly last year in my address to the United Nations. Unfortunately, such unfounded apprehensions are based on recollection of the conflict between the Christian and the Muslim world in past history, particularly during the Crusades. The west tends to think of the current Islamic resur-

gence in terms of the past expansion of Islam into Spain and beyond.

Q : Even France.

A : Yes; even France. This misguided notion of Western countries in general, is further confounded, in particular, by the Super Power rivalry in our regions. They have a competing interest in our mineral wealth, the oil and the oil life-line – the Gulf; the Arabian Sea; the Indian Ocean. These factors constitute a threat to the Muslim Ummah. Therefore, the more united the Muslim countries, the greater their chances of withstanding such threats.

Q : Right, Sir. Would you please elaborate upon your earlier proposal for the collective security of the Ummah ?

A : Yes. First of all, I want to make it quite clear that this is not a military pact, but a broad-based alliance for the utilisation of the collective resources of the Muslim countries in order to strengthen their potential for security. Pakistan, for example, is rich in human resources; it can offer its services, in this respect, to the entire Muslim world. Similarly, other Islamic countries can offer their resources in which they are particularly strong. The idea is to pool these resources and utilize them to the maximum advantage of the Ummah. In this way, we would be able to forge greater unity in the economic, political and social sense, and develop a common outlook and approach to the problems and needs of the Ummah. We would thus take a united stand on major issues

faced by the Ummah. Our *'deen'* tells us that there are no geographical barriers within the Islamic world and, therefore, we should rise above individual interests, and think and act in unison. It is in this context of the greater unity of the Muslim countries that my earlier proposal of collective security is to be viewed, rather than in terms of purely military alliances and pacts.

Q : Thank you. Do you see some new ray of hope regarding the solution of Afghan crisis and the withdrawal of Russians from that Muslim country at this point of time ?

A : Although I am an optimist by nature, yet, frankly speaking, I do not really see, at the present moment, any bright prospects for the Afghan situation. Therefore, there is a greater need in the Muslim countries, in the free world, and in the regional countries to take a more serious view of the Afghan situation, and to look more deeply into it. The factual position is that, today, the Soviets are in physical occupation of that country, and I do not think they are going to leave it in such a big hurry. Therefore, it should be our effort to adopt a stance that would lead to a political solution to the problem. We should be more practical in our thinking, and more pragmatic in our approach. It must also be realised that, today, Pakistan has become a front-line state. Of course, Pakistan will never compromise on principles. Its 80 million people are imbued with faith in the values of Islam, which they cherish above all else. Nevertheless, the Muslim Ummah should realise the difficulties faced today by Afghanistan, and the problems which will

be created for the Muslim countries, amongst whom Pakistan will be the first. Therefore, it is a matter of great importance that the Muslim world in particular, and the other countries – the freedom-loving people – in general, should realise what the consequences of allowing the Soviets to perpetuate their hold on Afghanistan would be?

Q: Excellency, one supplementary question. What are the Muslim world's obligations regarding Muslim refugees from Afghanistan? Your country is facing a lot of burden. So, how far are you satisfied with the help you are getting from the Muslim countries, particularly from Saudi Arabia?

A: We are, indeed, grateful to Saudi Arabia. Their contribution toward minimising our burden is enormous. We are deeply appreciative of this. I hope the other Muslim countries will take the lead from Saudi Arabia, in this respect. In fact, they are helping a great deal already. There are other countries also, who are providing help from the humanitarian point of view, and we are very grateful to them as well.

Q: Are you satisfied with the level of help you are getting, or something more is needed?

A: Well; no amount of help can be enough in such a situation. However, we are most grateful to the United Nations for their contribution, and also to several other countries for their assistance. We are getting actually something like 30 cents to a dollar from outside; the remaining 70 cents are provided by Pakistan itself.

Q : Yes, that is the point I realised, which I wanted to bring out in my interview, so that the people should know that they need to share your burden in a bigger way.

A : Fourteen hundred thousand people – 1.4 million is a large number !

Q : Excellency, how do you assess the role of Saudi Arabia in–one, peace-making among brother Arab Muslim countries, for example, between Syria and Jordan recently; and, two, in promoting the cause of Islamic unity, starting from the days of King Faisal, who was the pioneer of this movement for unity.

A : Saudi Arabia has played a very important role in the Islamic world, through the judicious utilisation of its resources for the benefit of Muslims; the steadfast guidance it has provided in the spiritual as well as the political field; and the exemplary way in which it has helped to bring about peaceful conditions between Syria and Jordan. I am also aware of the role that Saudi Arabia is playing behind the scene. What I very much appreciate is that Saudi Arabia does not like to be in the limelight, and prefers to carry on its good work quietly.

Q : They don't publicise it.

A : Yes; they don't publicise it. But, all the same, everyone realizes Saudi Arabia's enormous, complimentary efforts in every field in the Islamic world. I think we should have no reservation in acknowledging the tremendous role that Saudi Arabia has played in

bringing about the unity of the Muslim world. Look at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference; its Headquarters are situated in Saudi Arabia, and the main burden of running it is being borne by Saudi Arabia; its contribution to the accord between Syria and Jordan; its part in forging Islamic unity in many other respects, like the '*Dawa*', that is, the propagation of Islam.

Q: General preaching of *Rabita* and other organisations.

A: Yes; Rabita and other organisations. I think all of us should be very appreciative of the positive role that Saudi Arabia is playing.

Q: Last question, Sir. The Summit, Excellency, at this juncture requires obviously unity of rank in the Islamic world – I mean, effort for this purpose on the part of Islamic leaders. Would you prefer to make some appeal to your brothers – Kings, Presidents and Prime Ministers of the Muslim world – to produce this sort of unity, in word and deed, during this Summit, which is being watched by the entire world really? So, any message for your brothers, who will gather alongwith you in Makkah?

A: As I said earlier, I am an optimist by nature. I am hopefully expecting that all my brothers from various parts of the Muslim world, who are gathering first at *Khana-e-Kaaba* for *Umrah,* and then at Taif for deliberations, would rise to the occasion, and that we would devote all our energies towards the unification of the Islamic Ummah; in other words, we would rise above ourselves, and concentrate on promoting the

interests of the Muslim world. We would do our best to forgive and forget our individual differences, and thus show to the world at large that eight hundred million Muslims stand united. Indeed, Islam is a cementing force, which has no parallel in the world, through centuries of history, or of human civilisation. Islam has come to stay, and will, *Insha' Allah*, continue to enlighten the world. If at all there is a weakness, it is only in ourselves. So, my message, in fact, my appeal, to my brothers is that let us prove ourselves worthy of Islam. I am sure my worthy brothers will play a leading role in guiding the Muslim world – and I, as a humble servant, would watch and would follow in their footsteps – towards the unification of the Ummah.

Interviewer : Thank you.

President : Thank you.

BO JARBORG

Bo Jarborg, who was the London correspondent of Sweden's Radio and T.V. (1963-79) is now working as a free lance journalist there. He was also the Paris correspondent of Swedish Radio and T.V. (1959-63). Earlier, he worked in a number of Swedish newspapers. He was the Chief Editor of the daily GHT (1958-59). He was a member of the editorial staff of Sweden's leading daily 'DAGEN NYHETER'.

Bo Jarborg interviewed the President of Pakistan in January 1981.

INTERVIEW TO BO JARBORG SWEDISH JOURNALIST

8-1-1981

Interviewer: Well, when I requested this interview, I was specially interested in the role of Islam in the modern world; and, of course, I mean the political role of Islam. Can you tell me anything about how you look at that question ?

President : You see, Islam is a universal concept in itself and, unlike the other religions, it encompasses the complete way of life. Christianity, for example, tells you what belongs to the Church, and what to the State. In other words, it separates religion from politics, whereas Islam makes no such distinction, and it covers all aspects of human activity – political, religious, economic, social, legal, moral – in short, the whole way of life. So, from this point of view, the current resurgence of Islam is of tremendous value to mankind, as it represents the renewed aspirations of the Muslims to restructure their society and state in the light of Islamic values and traditions. It is, therefore, unfortunate – I am sorry to say so – that the West regards the resurgence of Islam as a revival of the period of Crusades, as though the Muslims are going to storm the Western countries, or other religions, or faiths. No, this is a totally wrong impression. Islam believes in co-existence; Islam believes in peace; and Islam believes in the good of mankind. So, if you view Islam in this context, and look upon it as a universal concept, then you will accept that it has a

very positive role to play in the 15th century of the Islamic calendar, and the 20th century of the Christian or Gregorian calendar.

Q : Which place do you think in the world would an Islamic bloc have, if you could realise an Islamic bloc? Or shall we take that question first? Can You establish an Islamic bloc, or do you wish to?

A : It is already established.

Q : It is not quite.......

A : No; if you are viewing it, say, in the form of Warsaw Pact, or NATO, or European Economic Community, then it is not quite so. But if you take it as an ethnic grouping, or the grouping of people of one faith, having common concepts and objectives, then its already established – 41 Muslim countries of the world have got together and formed the Organisation of Islamic Conference. They have already held two Summits, and the third is due on the 25th of this month in Jeddah. They have held eleven conferences of their Foreign Ministers. So, it has already formed itself into a political bloc.

Q : Well, which place in the world will this bloc take?

A : In what respect?

Q : I mean, at least we in the West regard the world as split up in three blocs; the western bloc, the Soviet bloc, and the so-called Third World – the non-aligned countries. Where would you place the Islamic bloc?

A : All the Muslim countries, except one, are members of the Non-Aligned Movement. They are all, practically, developing countries, and even some of the affluent countries, like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, fall in this category since, with all the wealth they have, and can afford, they can't obtain new technology. So, to your question as to where the Islamic bloc should be placed, I would say that it is already a part of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the developing countries of the Third World..

Q : So, more and more, now-a-days people are talking about the South-North concept. Where will you place the Islamic countries ?

A : They all belong to the South.

Q : Do you think that the Islamic countries could take some initiative in this North-South concept to bring about some mediation ?

A : No, I don't think so; because they all belong to the South. All the Muslim countries are part of the developing world and, as such, they have to follow an agreed policy on dialogue with the North. They are, therefore, not in a position to act independently as mediators. But, speaking frankly, I am not in favour of a sharp split among the community of nations, particularly in the free world. I think we should convince through a dialogue, like the United Nations Group of 77, so that the developed countries should themselves voluntarily help the developing countries in acquiring modern technology, in order to improve their economic conditions and standard of

living.

Q : Well, what do you expect from this Islamic Summit now in Jeddah ?

A : I am an optimist; and I believe truly in Islamic unity, not at the cost of anybody else, but purely as a Muslim bloc. In the Quranic concept of unity, there are no geographical bounds between one Islamic country and another Islamic country, though each can still pursue its national objectives. I am positive that this Third Summit will result in greater unity and better understanding among Muslim countries, promoting more economic and social contacts among them, and enabling them to act as a Commonwealth of Islamic Nations.

Q : Do you think that you would be able to solve the conflict between Iran and Iraq ?

A : I am rather doubtful, although this will be our effort. I am personally involved in this, as you know, as member of the Islamic Peace Committee. But, unfortunately, the environment is not yet conducive to an agreement. We only hope – and I say this with all the stress at my command – that we would try and impress on both Iran and Iraq to resolve this problem peacefully. In my opinion, none of the issues between them demands an armed conflict. The two could sit round a conference table, and, together, or with the help of friends, sort out this problem. This would be the effort of all Muslim countries in this Islamic Summit.

Q: You have taken initiatives in the United Nations concerning the Afghan question. Do you think you would be more optimistic there?

A: Yes; because, you see, the Afghan issue requires a political solution; it cannot be solved militarily, because it is a super power that has intervened militarily in the internal affairs of a Muslim non-aligned, developing country. In order to find a political solution, dialogue is necessary, and the initiative of the United Nations has created the prospects of such a dialogue. However, the four fundamental issues of the problem must never be lost sight of: the Soviet Union must withdraw its troops from Afghanistan; Afghanistan's status must be restored to that of a non-aligned Muslim country; the Afghan refugees, who number 1.4 million in Pakistan today, must return to Afghanistan with honour and dignity; and the people of Afghanistan should be allowed to choose their own type of government. I grant the Soviet this much that they have, not the right, but the justification of having a very friendly government in Afghanistan, because of its contiguous borders with the Soviet Union. We hope that the Islamic Summit will be able to generate enough heat and pressure on the Soviet Union to make it realise that it must resolve this problem politically.

Q: The British Foreign Minister, Lord Carrington had some plan concerning the future of Afghanistan, as a neutral country. Do you agree to that plan?

A: I have discussed it with Lord Carrington. I would like to support him in his other ideas, but not the idea of

a neutral Afghanistan, which I explained to him quite elaborately. He is associated with a country which, in its hey-day, was, in effect, a super power. The British Empire was then a super power, and it was in confrontation with Czarist Russia, which was another super power of the time. They resolved the issue of Afghanistan by drawing the line across the Oxus river. The British Empire served notice on Czarist Russia that one step this side of the Oxus river, and the Soviets would be considered at war with the British. The Soviets never took that one step. It was when the British Empire disintegrated, that the vaccum was created in this region, and Afghanistan lost its influence as a dominating, neutral country, and became more or less dependent on the Soviet Union. The Americans did not pressurise enough, and the Soviet Union just walked in. So, Lord Carrington perhaps thinks of this problem in terms of the environment that existed in mid-19th century, around 1836 onwards.

Q: You mentioned earlier about the Islamic Commonwealth. Pakistan was also a member of the British Commonwealth. Have you now decided to rejoin that organization ?

A: We would like to rejoin the Commonwealth provided the re-entry is honourable. We have explained this to our friends in the Commonwealth. Many of them are very keen on re-entry of Pakistan. I think that, as there is no precedent of a country rejoining after having got out of the Commonwealth, modalities are being worked out by them, and, if everything is nice and well, Pakistan may join the Commonwealth

again.

Interviewer : Mr. President, I thank you very much for this interview.

President : Thank you. And I wish to tell you that we regard Sweden as a good friend and ally. We have been associated with Sweden in many ways. You may not like this, but our closest relationship with Sweden is military, that is military hardware. But, even otherwise, politically and bilaterally, we have excellent relations. We have always had good support from your country in the United Nations. So, my very best wishes to your people; if you can convey my regards to them.

INTERVIEW TO NBS TELEVISION TEAM

10-1-1981

Interviewer: Mr. President, could you tell us why you feel the climate is right now for a negotiated settlement of Afghanistan?

President: Well, you see, we have always considered that the solution to all international problems, in general, and of the Afghan problem, in particular, must be political, and not military. This has been our effort right from the beginning. Whatever the other considerations may be, we believe that the world opinion; the overwhelming majority in the United Nations – one hundred and eleven votes – in favour of the resolution that demands withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, restoration of the non-aligned and Islamic status of Afghanistan and, above all, return of 1.4 million refugees with honour and dignity – plus, the activities of freedom-fighters inside Afghanistan – all these combined have brought about a realisation in the quarters concerned that, perhaps, a dialogue is the answer; a start towards political solution.

Q: What role do you see for the freedom-fighters in any negotiated peace?

A: The role of freedom-fighters is of great importance. I wish to stress that I am a great admirer of the Afghan people. If you read their history, you will find that they have fought three wars of independence; and

have never accepted subjugation under any foreign power. Since it is a question of Afghanistan's freedom and Afghanistan's honour, I think those who are now laying down their lives for the independence of their country have an important role. But my reference to them in answer to your previous question was to their activities inside Afghanistan. And it is a fact that these are being pursued without anybody's material assistance to them: they are fighting virtually with their bare hands.

Q: Do they deserve a seat at the negotiating table ?

A: In my opinion, they certainly deserve a seat; they are, in fact, the concerned party.

Q: Should they sit at the table ?

A: Yes, they should.

Q: Babrak should sit at the table !

A: No. We don't recognise Mr Babrak Karmal, because he is a person who, as I have said before, has come riding on foreign tanks. So, he can't be accepted as a free agent to negotiate. But, in the overall context of a dialogue, one could talk to his representatives in their capacity as members of a political party, not as members of the Afghanistan Government. You see the difference?

Q: You are a military man, and you are a realist. What are the odds of the Soviets pulling their troops out of that country?

A : The odds are against. I think it is very difficult to expect that the Soviet Union will withdraw its ninety thousand troops from an area which is the soft underbelly of the Soviet Republics. They are meant to stay for a long time.

Q : Then what is there to negotiate?

A : Well, a dialogue is always better than no dialogue. It helps to clear the air. Apart from being a soldier and a realist, I am also an optimist; I look at the brighter side.

Q : How has Pakistan's security been affected by the Soviet move into Afghanistan, and the overflights of your country?

A : The foreign intervention in Afghanistan and the presence of eighty or ninety thousand Russian troops, have posed enormous security problems, not only for Pakistan, but for the region itself. This intervention, in my opinion, is in direct contravention of the United Nations Charter. It is in violation of human rights and freedom of a non-aligned country. It has also created a precedent, which, if it is accepted, will be a cause for great security concern to Pakistan and to the countries of this region.

Q : Have citizens of your country been killed by these overflights?

A : Yes. Some have been killed; not by overflights, but by bombing and strafing undertaken to punish, according to the Soviets, the freedom-fighters whom

they thought they were chasing.

Q: What is it costing you to take care of the millions of refugees in this country?

A: Let me tell you frankly about the real sentiments of the people of Pakistan, which I am sure you must have sensed by now. This is a task that one cannot evaluate in financial terms. Human misery, or the relief of it, in my opinion, can't be judged by monetary yardstick. But Pakistan is alive to the problem; it is even more alive to its responsibilities. Here are 1.4 million refugees in Pakistan who have been forced to leave their hearth and home because of foreign intervention. They are today existing, or trying to exist, for the day when they can go back to their homeland with honour and dignity. No price, in my view, can be high enough to help such human beings. We are very grateful to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and to many Muslim countries and western nations, who are helping us financially and, in other ways, in this task.

Q: How long can you keep that door open to the flow of refugees; its going to be a long winter?

A: Yes; but, as I said, if once Pakistan has accepted in principle that it has a responsibility to look after its neighbour, who also happens to be a fellow Muslim, then I don't think it can lay down a time-limit. Pakistan will look after the Afghan refugees as long as required. At the same time, we expect, and hope, that conditions will be created in which these refugees can go back to their homes soon.

Q : What would you hope the United States should do to help you out in the security areas to improve your security ?

A : Well; we have always considered that the security of Pakistan, as, indeed, of any country, depends entirely on the people of that country. We are eighty million people, and we intend to guard every inch of our country. Of course, we also hope to have the moral and material support of friends. Today, we have many friends who are concerned over the security of Pakistan. We have friendly, neighbouring countries, like China and the Muslim countries. We expect that a friendly country, like the United States of America, with whom we have had very good relations for quite some time now, would also be concerned over the security problems of Pakistan.

Q : Do you expect to receive more than "peanuts" from Mr. Reagan ?

A : We have not had any direct contact with the President-elect or the new Administration; and, I think, it will be premature to comment on this issue unless we have had some dialogue with them.

Q : Are you hopeful of good relationship with the new Administration ?

A : Yes. We were even hopeful with the previous Administration; and we are more hopeful about the new Administration.

Q : You know, General Haig said at his hearings, the

other day, that one of the main tasks ahead of him would be to manage Soviet power. Do you believe that it is one of the problems in the world today?

A: In terms of super power rivalry, and on the international plane, in my opinion, it is one of the major concerns of the United States of America; and I am glad to hear that somebody has identified the problem.

Q: Looking ahead for Afghanistan in the next years, what do you see?

A: As I said earlier on, I am an optimist. As a soldier, we are taught to plan for the worst, but hope for the best.

Q: Do you believe the *Mujahideen* will accept anything less than the Soviet withdrawal?

A: I don't think so. I don't think they will compromise on the security, integrity, and freedom of their country.

Q: Then what do you talk about?

A: Oh! We talk precisely about the security, integrity and freedom of their country—Afghanistan. Four basic points are the pre-requisites for any dialogue; withdrawal of all foreign troops; restoration of the status of Afghanistan as a non-aligned, Muslim country; return of refugees to their hearth and home with honour and dignity; and, fourth, freedom of the people of Afghanistan to select their own government.

Q : One last question: as a military man. The Soviets have not been able to do it in Afghanistan. Have they gone wrong, militarily, on any front?

A : I think the credit goes to the Afghan *Mujahideen*. If the Soviet Union has not been able to bring the areas under its control within one year, I would say it is because of the determination and the spirit of sacrifice of the *Mujahideen*, getting practically no help from outside.

Q : Could Babrak remain in office without the presence of those eighty to ninety thousand Soviet troops?

A : I doubt it.

Interviewer : Thank you.

President : Thank you.

INDER JIT

Inder Jit, who is a son of the late Doyen of the Indian Press Corps, Durga Das, is a senior and experienced journalist of India and occasionally writes on Indo-Pak relations. Inder Jit worked as the special correspondent of the Times of India in Pakistan and Afghanistan in February 1962. He was on the editorial staff of the Hindustan Times New Delhi (1948-50). Later, he worked as a journalist in London and served British newspapers, the Daily Telegraph and the Times.

Inder Jit, is the Editor of India News and Feature Alliance (INFA) which he joined in 1962.

INTERVIEW TO INDER JIT INDIAN JOURNALIST

23-2-1981

Interviewer : Mr. President; how do you view the present state of relations between India and Pakistan? Have these suffered any deterioration in the past few months? If so, what has caused the setback ?

President : My answer, I hope, will not surprise you. I think, in recent months, the relationship has improved, in the sense that we seem to have a greater understanding at the leadership level – at my level and at the Indian Prime Minister's level – because of the exchange of some notes and letters between us. And, also, I feel that, a few months back, slight deterioration in relationship that we had because of certain events, that seems to be now behind us. I am of the view that with what is going on at the present moment, the chances of improving the relationship are better than they were sometime back.

Q : Thank you Mr. President. The Press in your country has recently talked loudly of military build-up across the border. Even now there are reports in the Indian Press, before I came to Pakistan, of heavy concentration of Pakistani forces along the Jessalmer and Barmer districts of Rajasthan. There is no build-up on the Indian side. What is the reality on your side, Sir ?

A : There is no build-up whatsoever on the Pakistan side either. But this is amazing. The Pakistan Press has not

stated anything on the alleged build-up on the Pakistan or the Indian side. If you permit me to use the word "scare", somehow the scare seems to have been spread by the Indian Press. I do not really know the reason for this; nor do I know the forces which were working behind it. But all of a sudden we found that the Indian Press was giving out news of heavy concentration of troops on the Pakistan side of the border, and nothing on the Indian side. This subject, to the best of my knowledge, was also brought up in the Indian Parliament. However, this is all utter fabrication. There is no truth in it, I can say, at least on the Pakistan side. Leave alone concentration, our troops have not gone any closer to the border.

Q: Would you say, Mr. President, that this has been the situation over the last few months, and there is nothing to it all?

A: None whatsoever. During the winter months, as you are aware, there is always some movement of troops, on a minor scale on both sides. In fact, the movement on the Indian side has been much greater this year; but these are the usual annual training exercises. You know there is a contact, at various levels, on both sides; and we check with each other whenever we notice more than the normal movements.

Q: Mr. President, do you agree that such reports create a war psychosis even as the leaders of the two countries repeatedly declare that they stand for peace and friendship, and this war psychosis is rather dangerous; and do you think some kind of a permanent arrangement needs to be made to ensure against dangerous

build-up of this nature in the future?

A: Very right! I must say that these reports, which started appearing in the Indian Press, made me wonder myself as to where exactly the Pakistan forces were concentrated. I think it is the responsibility of the Press on both sides – I won't say, the Indian side alone – to promote better understanding and more confidence, rather than create scare through false reports of troop concentrations on the borders. I agree with you that it would be better for India and Pakistan to come to some sort of an understanding by which such rumours, baseless news, and similar other misleading stories could be exposed, and the truth made known to people on both sides.

Q: What kind of an understanding, or what kind of an arrangement could there possibly be?

A: Well; the whole thing starts off from a lack of trust. We must not forget that we – India and Pakistan – have fought three wars. We must realise – and I would not mince my words in saying this to my own people – that wars do not solve political problems; that political problems must be resolved through political means. In this year of the Lord 1981, might should not be right. We must have better understanding, and create more confidence not only among the people, but also at the executive level. When Sardar Swaran Singh was recently here, I said to him, "Tell us whether Pakistan should have a force for its own security or not? And if you think that it should, then please ask your experts to assess its security requirements, based on its geographical borders and

strategic location, and let us know the quantum of armed forces, we should have, I would accept their finding, and abide by it. Let them similarly decide how much force India should have, and I will not question their decision. However, I would have every reason to be concerned when eighteen Indian divisions face Pakistan, and would like to know why they are there?" I made this offer to India through Sardar Swaran Singh. The response that came later on was that this was not a fair proposition, and that Pakistan should have what it considers necessary, and so should India. Thereupon, I said that, if this is India's point of view, then why does it get allergic to Pakistan's pursuit of its legitimate defensive requirements? Here, again, I made yet another suggestion. I proposed to India that if it wanted to know what we have by way of military equipment and force, it was welcome to ask us, and we would tell exactly what we have, and we would not question what India has.

A few years ago – almost 35 years back – we were one country. But for obvious, good reasons, we live separately as neighbours, as friends. Somehow, since then we have fought three wars. Now, I very humbly suggest to you and, through you, to the people of India, that it is time that both the countries should decide what is good for them. Speaking for Pakistan, I can say that there can be no doubt that the good of both the countries lies in peaceful relationship, in understanding, in confidence in each other, and in respect for each other. Pakistan is a small country, while India is a big country. Pakistan has never considered itself in competition with India; we just cannot. We are 80 million people; India is 615 million. India is a bigger partner in this region; it has

to play its role, and we grant it that much. I think there is a requirement of better understanding and greater confidence between the two, and, I am sure, sooner or later, this will be achieved.

Q: These are excellent thoughts, Mr. President. I recall having a chat with Sardar Swaran Singh on his return. He mentioned that he had said that this question of force levels, what you are hinting at, would have to be preceded by some kind of a political understanding. Is that what he said?

A: No, he did not say so. Not exactly. While discussing the bilateral relations, we came to the question of defence forces, and it was at this point that I made this offer unilaterally to India. However, whether it is your idea, or Sardar Swaran Singh's, I agree that everything must emerge from a political understanding. It is through political understanding that better military understanding and greater confidence in each other will be reached.

Q: Thank you Mr. President. May I now go on to the next question? You see, India and its leaders, as you pointed out earlier on, opposed partition for long; but eventually they did accept the creation of Pakistan. Today, they wish Pakistan well, and want it to be strong, stable and prosperous. If I might add, yet many in Pakistan still seem to feel that India wants to undo partition? What is the basis for this Pakistani fear when India has nothing to gain? What, Mr. President, is your own perception? Do you believe that India poses a threat to Pakistan?

A : I must admit that there is a doubt in the minds of the Pakistani people as to whether Indian leadership, or a segment of Indian public, has at all reconciled itself to the idea of Pakistan. Whether it was right or wrong, or what were its causes, it can be debated for the next umpteen years, and many books will be written on it, yet nobody will ever be able to find out what started the 1971 war. However, its outcome can never be doubted. History will record that Bangladesh was created as a result of the 1971 war. Good luck to Bangladesh; its people are our brothers and friends, and we wish them well. I am really glad to hear some of my friends say that India wants to see a strong, stable and prosperous Pakistan. We are, indeed, very grateful to them. But once bitten twice shy. In '71, as a result of the collusion between India and Russia, Pakistan was dismembered. So, this tiny country, in comparison to India, is now a bit scared lest somebody should dismember what is left of it. It is a psychological factor. Because of past experience, tension sometimes builds up on minor issues, on fabricated news. It can all be defused if there is a genuine effort, and a few more people like Mr. Inderjit come forward with the mission of creating real understanding and good relationship between India and Pakistan.

Q : Thank you very much, Mr. President. You mentioned Bangladesh, and I agree a thousand percent with you that much will be written on this issue over the years. But so long as the feeling persists as though India was responsible for dismembering Pakistan, and that there was collusion between India and Russia, there would be some kind of a psychological barrier towards

building greater confidence. We, on our side, feel that we did nothing, in the sense that we had our problems on our hands. Now, as long as we can forget that, and accept the reality of today without going back to the past, it could create the kind of atmosphere for greater understanding and greater trust.

A : Very right! We should stop living in the past: and the sooner we forget the past, the better for both Pakistan and India. I am trying to do this, and advise my countrymen to do so: this is what I tell my Indian friends also. Let's forget the past: start a new chapter, and have real friendship between India and Pakistan.

Q : Sir, while we talk about the new chapter and forgetting the past, you see there are certain misgivings which exist in the Indian mind: and some of my questions, if I may say, would reflect these misgivings, which I feel need to be cleared as a first step towards greater understanding. Now in this context, my next question is that Pakistan had reached an understanding with the United States of America in 1959 under which Washington had assured all help in the event of any threat to Pakistan's integrity and security. According to recent reports, Islamabad now wants a comprehensive treaty with Washington, seeking full and prompt US support in the event of an attack or aggression from any quarter. Does this mean that you apprehend the possibility of an attack from India?

A : Pakistan has many neighbours. We have in the east, India: in the north-east, China: in the north, we have Russia: our Afghan neighbour, in the north west, is

with the Soviet Union now.

Q: Is it true that they are moving into that area?

A: Yes, it is true. There are 80,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan. As I was saying, we have many neighbours, among whom are Iran and China. Surely, the understanding of 1959 with the United States could not have meant that we were asking for security guarantee against Iran, who is a brotherly state, or against China, with whom we have had perfect relations. The understanding of 1959 was an executive agreement based only on a particular contingency. This agreement was of no use to us in our conflict with India in '65 and '71. Now, when we talk of this agreement with the United States of America, then, for that matter, India also has an agreement with the Soviet Union for particular contingencies. So, as far as the 1959 agreement is concerned, it is similarly valid for particular contingencies. It is not a treaty or a military pact.

Q: Not a military pact in any sense?

A: None whatsoever.

Q: Mr. President, now I am going on to the next question. India has sought to set at rest Pakistani doubts about Indian intentions by offering a 'no-war pact' on more than one occasion. However, according to Indian leaders, the proposal has been turned down by Pakistan each time. Do you, Mr. President, think there is need for a 'no-war pact' between the two countries and, if so, what would be the best way to

go about it?

A : In the last three-and-a-half years, we have received no suggestion from India, as such, regarding a 'no-war pact'. But this question has been asked a number of times by journalists and friends, and my answer has always been that the Simla Agreement is virtually a 'no-war pact', provided we live by the letter and spirit of the Agreement. Recently, I read – whether it is right or wrong – that Mrs. Indira Gandhi has totally ruled out a 'no-war pact'.

Q : Many people in India feel and talk about a 'no-war pact' only because they feel that there seems to be some crisis of credibility *vis-a-vis* the Simla Agreement. I will not go into that just now. We will deal with it a little later, Sir; and, therefore, one is inclined to think whether a 'no-war pact' in the present situation, with you reaffirming your faith and friendship and desire for better relationship, would not help the situation?

A : You have a point. But history shows us that all pacts, whatever they be, are not worth the paper on which they are written, if the spirit behind them is lacking. I personally feel that we should concentrate more on developing that spirit, rather than on seeking agreements on paper. I think the situation is ripe for such an approach between India and Pakistan. There is a realisation on both the sides – and I hope Mrs. Indira Gandhi is as keen as I am – that we should really make a breakthrough for a better understanding between the two countries.

Q: Mr. President, if I may pursue this; in spite of what you have been good enough to say, people have not only been talking in terms of 'no-war pact', some of them have even been talking in terms of a joint defence pact for the sub-continent, and so on. Have you ever given some thought to this matter, because at one stage the proposal had been made by President Ayub; but then it was turned down by Pandit Nehru, who said, "Joint defence against whom?" Now, has any thought been given to this also, or you think it is not necessary?

A: It occurs to me that the same question can be asked, again, today – "Joint defence against whom?" You have NATO and Warsa Pacts and pacts like these which have common threat perceptions, and common enemies. I do not think Pakistan and India are facing a common enemy. Somebody considered an enemy by India is, perhaps, a little more friendly to Pakistan; and a friend of Pakistan, perhaps, may be considered a bit of an enemy of India! I think we should forget such notions, and come to an understanding that we – Pakistan and India – want to live together in the coming years, leaving the past behind and opening up now vistas of friendship.

Q: Sir, in the context of leaving the past behind, may I ask another question? All kinds of reports keep appearing in the Indian Press, not merely based on what Indian journalists write, but what foreign newspapers also report, which create a crisis of confidence. We read your statements in our despatches, and we come to the conclusion that, yes, it is going to be peace and good relations. Then we read

something in the *Guardian*, to which all major sources of world information seem agreed, that your country has entered into a secret deal with Saudi Arabia for the supply of two Pakistan army divisions for a payment of eight hundred million US dollars annually. According to some reports, these divisions may not be sent to Saudi Arabia, but would be kept in readiness in Pakistan like a rapid deployment force. What Mr. President, are the facts? I am asking only this because I would like to get the record straight so far as the Press in India is concerned.

A : I say, this is totally false. You ought to know us better, and so should the *Guardian*. We are not mercenaries. We have an understanding not only with Saudi Arabia, but twenty-seven other countries – Islamic and non-Islamic – where we have some military training missions – air force or army, or both. We have some elements in Saudi Arabia on training assignments, and that is all. A rapid deployment force of the United States of America has a different connotation from that of Pakistan. Who on earth is going to move these two divisions? Neither we, nor the Saudis, have means of transport; and against whom; where to take them? So, all such reports are mere conjectures.

Q : How many people do you have in Saudi Arabia, Sir?

A : About 1,500, most of them engineers, engaged in improving roads and irrigation canals, and, may be, two hundred, or a little more, other personnel in training of infantry, armour, artillery, etc.

Q : You see, although there have been denials by you and....

A : And denial by Saudi Arabia as well. They have also denied these reports.

Q : Sir, I recall, and, I hope, you will not mind my mentioning this. After the Taif Summit, you were reported to have said that if there was any trouble for Saudi Arabia, you would personally lead the army in the defence of that country. This statement was pounced upon by some of our experts, who are regarded as experts, to say that if General Zia is going to rush to the aid of the Saudis in the event of some trouble, externally or internally, there will have to be some force in Saudi Arabia already before he can lead it himself. Would you like to say something on this, Sir?

A : I didn't know people read so much between the lines! Yes, I said so. You know, I was just about to mention this myself to your last question; and this shows my bent of mind; my personal regard for Saudi Arabia and its people. I said that, if at any time there was a threat to the security of Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan was asked, I would lead the force myself. This was only an expression of my attachment to the Holy Land; but this did not mean that Pakistan has a force of two thousand troops in Saudi Arabia, which General Zia-ul-Haq would lead in battle. Yet, I would still say that if ever there was a threat to the security of Saudi Arabia, by God, I would be the first man to fight.

Q : Threat to the security externally I take it, or if they have problems internally!

A : We don't interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. We are talking only about the external threats.

Q : So, I was glad to ask this question, Mr. President, because people thought that you had made some kind of personal commitment to the present regime there, that, even if they had some trouble internally, you would rush to their aid.

A : But they have no trouble. They are a very solid, stable dynasty, and they have done, and are doing a lot for their country.

Q : Mr. President, there have also been some reports in New Delhi to suggest – I am only wanting to get the record straight – that Pakistan has, in addition, agreed to undertake responsibility, on additional payment, for the defence of Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. Is there any truth in these reports?

A : No; once again, these reports are totally false. What talk has been going on after Taif, of which you must have heard and what the Makkah Declaration of the Islamic Conference also says, is that the security of the Gulf is the exclusive responsibility of the Gulf States themselves, and nobody else could, or should, come into it. Pakistan has no intention whatsoever of getting involved in it.

Q : No suggestion, even remotely, on that point was made to you at Taif that in case of threat to their security, the Gulf States would like the assistance of a State like yours.

A : None whatsoever. In fact, in my speech at Taif, I categorically said that the security of the Gulf was the responsibility of the Gulf States.

Q : Mr. President, may I now draw your attention to another misgiving which has been created in my country by the recent American study by the Rand Corporation. I don't know whether this study has come to your notice.

A : I have not seen it, but I have heard about it.

Q : This Rand Corporation visited here, and the conclusion it has come to is that the top military and other thinking people in Pakistan are of the opinion that India has been, and will always remain, the principal threat to Pakistan. Now, do you accept their conclusion, or do you think they have gone off at the wrong end ?

A : No; partly, they are right, if one goes by record, and by history. They have, presumably, based their conclusion on the past record of India and Pakistan having fought three wars. They also probably observed that Pakistan has good relationship with China, working arrangement with the Soviet Union and fraternal ties with Iran. Now, who is left among its neighbours? It is India. So, I think, they have come to that conclusion that India will always be a

threat to Pakistan. All I have to say is that Rand Corporation can draw their own conclusions, whereas we will draw our own. Whatever somebody else may say or want, so far as we are concerned, we would like to have good neighbourly relations with India.

Q: Mr. President, do I take it that you do not consider India to be the main threat ?

A: Militarily speaking, I will not write it off because, as I said earlier, there is a history behind our relationship, and also due to the present disposition of troops. Today, unfortunately, 80 percent of the Indian troops are facing Pakistan. All important Indian installations are facing Pakistan. The new Jaguar aircraft that India has purchased cannot reach China. They can only be utilized in this region. We wish India well in furthering its own defence capability. But these are the elements which constitute a threat, and which one cannot take lightly. One has to view things in their actual reality. If one is going all out to have good relationship, one would like to know whether the other side wants it also. I must tell you very frankly; when I met Mrs. Gandhi in Salisbury in April 1980, I asked her, "What are you afraid of? Pakistan is a small country". She said, "You are a major threat to India, because you have attacked us three times before". I said, "Madam, it was you who reduced us to one-half, and dismembered us. So, how do you consider Pakistan a threat to India?" I told her, "I wish to assure you that, irrespective of how you may see us, we want to be very friendly with India". So, between India and Pakistan, this jigsaw puzzle will not be solved until such time as they

really try to remove unnecessary doubts, misgivings, and fear between them.

Q: Mr. President, you were good enough earlier to say that these no-war and other pacts are sometimes not worth the paper on which they are written; much more important is the spirit of understanding among the countries. In this context, may I now turn your attention to the Simla Agreement? Many in India feel that the Simla Agreement provided a *de facto* solution of the Kashmir issue along the actual line of control, resulting from the Cease-fire Agreement of 17 December 1971. The Simla Agreement, it is further argued in India, virtually gives the line of control the status of an international border, a position which is recognised in Pakistan also. Mr. Bhutto, it is said, wanted time to formalise this understanding, and hence the reference in the Agreement to "a final settlement" of the issue. What is Pakistan's position now on this informal understanding? One gets the feeling that this is still a major hurdle.

A: It is a hurdle, because we tried and have not been able to find out from India whether there was some secret understanding at the time of signing of the Simla Agreement in regard to the line of control.

Q: Sir, isn't it the position that this line of control will not be changed through use of force by either country, which thus gives it the status of an international border?

A: No, no! This line of control resulted from a cease-fire

agreement: it does not replace the international border. The fact that both sides agree not to resort to the use of force to alter its position, clearly shows that it is not the final position, and both sides can take the issue to any forum that they like. In other words, the Simla Agreement does not say that Pakistan will not talk about Kashmir at any place except in the presence of the Indian Prime Minister, or when the Indian and Pakistani teams meet. Kashmir is, unfortunately, a hurdle in the relations between Pakistan and India; but it is a political problem and, I say, we should solve it politically, whether we should solve it now, next year, or the year after. India, being a bigger country, should show greater flexibility, and make a bigger gesture; and, if it can accommodate the UN General Assembly Resolutions on the Kashmir problem, and resolve it in the light of those Resolutions, I think, it will be a very big step towards the normalisation of relations betwen India and Pakistan.

Q: You are talking in terms of going back to the UN General Assembly Resolutions?

A: Yes. On this, our position has never changed. The Simla Agreement has not replaced the Resolutions of the United Nations. The Simla Agreement has only indicated the *modus operandi* of solving the problems, including that of Kashmir. It says, let us talk bilaterally first to resolve a problem and, if we are not satisfied, then we can turn to any forum, like the United Nations, or the Non-Aligned Movement.

Q: Sir, the general impression in India is that the understanding of the Simla Agreement was that the issues

were to be resolved bilaterally, and the object of the whole exercise was to take them away from the international forums.

A : Yes, that was the general spirit of the Agreement, except in the case of Kashmir where it says very clearly in para 4 of the Agreement that, notwithstanding the position maintained by either side, the Kashmir problem should be resolved peacefully. Mark the wording–"the position maintained by either side". Our position is that, on the Kashmir issue, we will abide by the United Nations Resolutions, which we hope some day India would also accept.

Q : Sir, this raises altogether a new point. When do you expect to have bilateral discussions on the Kashmir issue? In fact, there is a lot of misunderstanding on this score.

A : Since it is a very crucial issue, I think it should be deferred for the time being. You know, when you are trying to solve a big problem, you should first solve the smaller problems, so that the field is cleared. This is how I would like to proceed. Once we have solved the minor problems, and removed misunderstandings and misconceptions, then at an appropriate stage, we could talk bilaterally on the Kashmir issue.

Q : Sir, in this context, may I quote the exact words from the Simla Agreement? The Simla Agreement provided for resolving the differences between two countries – and I quote from the Agreement–"by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations, or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon

between them", So, the whole emphasis was on bilateral negotiations.

A : The next para to this also deals with Kashmir.

Q : Yes. In this context, there is also a lot of misgivings, Mr. President, because we find that Pakistan has not only been raising the Kashmir issue repeatedly at various international forums, including the Islamic Summit, but equating it with Palestine question, and saying that the issue concerns the Islamic Ummah. Don't you really feel that these statements are contrary to the letter and spirit of bilateralism in the Agreement?

A : You should know that we did not raise the issue even in the Islamic Conference. It was mentioned in my speech in a particular context; and it was at Pakistan's initiative that this issue was not included in the final communique, or any resolutions of the Conference. Even, during my address at the United Nations, on behalf of the Islamic Ummah, I did not raise it, but mentioned it in the context of the inability of the United Nations to solve such problems as those of Palestine and Kashmir.

Q : That was a very sophisticated way of putting it, as we see it in New Delhi; nevertheless, it was brought in. But, Sir, in the case of Islamic Summit, was it necessary to even mention it in the course of your statement?

A : Yes, it was very necessary, because I was citing the major problems facing the Muslims throughout the

world, and this naturally included the Muslims of Kashmir. You cannot say that this problem is dormant. It is very much alive. India should not be so allergic to the mention of Kashmir in one context or the other. We do not want to unnecessarily provoke India. Whenever we have mentioned the Kashmir issue, we have done so in a very careful manner. As far as the spirit of the Simla Agreement is concerned, we have always preferred bilateral talks first, before taking up any matter, including the Kashmir issue, in other forums.

Q: Quite, Sir. In this context, wouldn't it have been better if the issue was raised by your Foreign Minister, or by yourself at the Summit with India.

A: We have discussed this issue at the Foreign Ministers' level, and also at my level.

Q: Sir, with whom did you discuss it at your level?

A: I mentioned it to Foreign Minister Vajpaee when he came here. We had very frank and useful discussions on Kashmir. I mentioned the issue partly to Mr. Desai, when I met him in Kenya; I think, also to Mrs. Gandhi, at Salisbury.

Q: Sir, what was the response of all the three, Vajpaee, Morarjee Desai and Indira Gandhi, separately?

A: Vajpaee – very understanding.

Q: What did he say ?

A : He advanced India's arguments, but accepted this as a problem, which we must resolve and resolve peacefully; and this is exactly what we recommend. Mr. Morarji Desai, I must say, a very able statesman as he is, was understanding, but firm. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was extremely allergic.

Q : What was Morarji Desai's response when you discussed this issue with him?

A : He accepted that the problem of Kashmir was there. If I can quote him correctly, he said, "You are at liberty to raise this problem, and if we can discuss it mutually and come to a conclusion, it would be better for both the countries".

Q : And what was Mrs. Gandhi's specific response, apart from your view that she was allergic?

A : I really cannot recollect it precisely. The impression I carried was that she was terribly allergic to the Kashmir issue; and, I think, she asked why we kept raising the issue. I explained to her that this was written into the Simla Agreement, and we were going strictly by the letter and spirit of that Agreement, or something on those lines.

Q : Sir, my knowledge tells me, you were occasionally talking to Mr. Morarji Desai on telephone. I was wondering whether the question of a summit between the two of you ever came up.

A : Not in the context of the Simla Agreement. But, during our meeting at Kenyatta's funeral, Mr. Desai

was very kind to ask me as to when I am coming to Delhi? I told him, "Sir, at the first available opportunity. Whenever I feel that my visit to Delhi could be more beneficial to the relationship between our two countries, I will be there in no time".

Q: The Simla Agreement was signed eight years ago. Among other things, it sought to progressively normalise relations between the two countries, step by step, in various fields – communications, air links, overflights, travel facilities, trade and cooperation in economic fields, and exchange in science, culture and sports. Are you satisfied with the progress achieved so far? If not, what needs to be done?

A: In a way I am satisfied that there has been some progress; but I think that a lot more can be done.

Q: A cultural delegation was supposed to come to Pakistan, and the idea was accepted in principle about a year ago, but nothing has happened in this direction.

A: No; but we had your 'sarod' player, Amjad Ali.

Q: Sir, he was here, may I be permitted to say, at the invitation of India's Ambassador for the Republic Day function?

A: Really? Kanwar Natwar Singh (Indian Ambassador) didn't tell us this!

Q: There was a proposal, several months back, that some Indian *'ghazal'* singers, poets, and others should

come, but before I left New Delhi, they were still waiting for a green signal from your side.

A : We are all for improvement in the cultural field. A number of *'ghazal'* singers and *'qawwals'* from our side have been to India. Mehdi Hasan and Ghulam Sabri have been to India.

Q : Sir, they came individually. One was thinking in terms of delegations.

A : Yes, in that respect, I think, we should do a bit more.

Q : Sir, in this context, sometime back it was announced that the link between Khokhrapar and Barmer would be restored; yet there has been no movement in that direction either.

A : There were some problems of rail communications; not on our side. I think the difficulty seems to be on your side.

Q : Sir, do you feel that enough is being done by both countries, under the Simla Agreement, to prevent hostile propaganda, and to disseminate such information as would promote the development of friendly relations between them as provided for in the Simla Agreement? In this particular context, New Delhi is particularly unhappy about the way the recent communal and other incidents in Muradabad and elsewhere were projected in Pakistan, both officially and in the Press, as being anti-Muslim. Sir, in this context, your official spokesman had said there were

anti-Muslim riots.

A : I think the reports received by the press here came through News Agencies. We had no correspondent of our own in India at that time. We allow our papers to publish what they like as long as they keep within the bounds of journalistic ethics. This goes also for papers of the National Press Trust which is supposed to be under Government control. If something has happened inside India like the communal riots, which hurts them, it also hurts us. Unnecessarily splashing or exaggerating those happenings, in my opinion, is not good for either India or Pakistan; nor it is good for their relationship.

Q : Sir, many in India seem to feel, perhaps rightly or wrongly, that your Press has full freedom to write what it likes in regard to India; otherwise normally, there is a restraint. Do you think some kind of friendly advice could be given to the Press in this country in the context of the Simla Agreement, if I may say so, because, in this particular case, it was not so much objection to Press reports as to the fact that the official spokesman had expressed the view that these riots were anti-Muslim, and the Press was then able to play it up in a big way.

A : I do not know what – or whether anything – was said by an official spokesman. There is, no doubt, one should be a little more careful. I meet the prominent editors and journalists practically once a month, and I see in them a genuine desire for exercising restraint on news stories concerning not only Pakistan, but also India. But sometimes something goes wrong

somewhere, and there is some sensational reporting.

Q : Sir, if I may be permitted to mention -- I don't know whether it came to your notice – one of your leading newspapers had carried a cartoon showing Indira Gandhi, our Prime Minister, as *Durga* with slit head of a Muslim. Now, don't you think, Sir, this kind of.... when the Press editors meet you, they might be formally advised that this sort of thing will not help in the relationship we want to build?

A : We do honestly want them to be careful on such matters, but sometimes an editor wants to show off his freedom.

Q : Sir, there is a view in India that Pakistan is currently more interested in identifying itself with the Islamic countries and not with secular India, ignoring history, geography, and common background, we do consider Pakistan was founded on the basis of Islam. Nevertheless, people in India would like to know where does Pakistan's interest lie primarily with the sub-continent, or with West Asia.

A : With both. Our policy is to align ourselves with the Muslim countries, because Pakistan is basically a Muslim country; and, being a part of the sub-continent, Pakistan must have good relationship with India as much, if not better, than it has with other countries in South-Asia. India's secularism does not influence our policy. We are very closely associated with China; and we feel that our association with India should also be as close.

Q: Sir, may I now turn to the nuclear question? You have denied that there is any effort to produce the Islamic bomb, and yet literature gets published, time and again, in the foreign Press about it. The American Government is acting in a certain way; the Canadian Government has come out with certain facts, and so on and so forth. Doubts are created when you are going for enriched uranium, which is really not required for your own purposes of power generation. Doubts also arise when one finds that the whole exercise is not under the Atomic Energy Commission, but under the Defence Ministry. So, would you like to comment on this?

A: First, it is utterly false that the Defence Ministry has anything to do with it. Our nuclear installations and facilities are not under the Defence Ministry – not even affiliated with them in the remotest way. They are under the Atomic Energy Commission, which is an independent autonomous authority, and I am looking after it as the Chief Executive. Our nuclear programme is peaceful. We consider it our right to acquire nuclear technology, because that is the only alternative we developing countries have to fill the gaps in our energy requirements. The oil we produce is wholly inadequate, and the rising prices of oil will never allow us to catch up with our energy requirements in the next twenty years or so. The only alternative for us is to acquire nuclear technology. The enrichment of uranium is a technology that is more for peaceful purposes, than for anything else. I have said that our programme is peaceful; and we are determined to acquire technology.

Q: According to our experts, there is a project called

706, and allegedly it is under General Anis Ali Syed. I don't know whether this is a fact, but our experts seem to believe this. Would you like to say something on this?

A : They have apparently picked this up from stories on the so-called Islamic bomb. Otherwise, how the hell would they piece all such conjectures together? Anis Ali Syed is not a General, in the first place. There is a Brigadier, Anis Ali Syed, who is an Engineer, and was associated with the civil works in one of the installations of the Atomic Energy Commission. I am sure there are hundred and one military engineers working on various projects in India, building bus stands, nuclear facilities, ordnance depots, etc., etc. It does not mean that they are all making atomic bombs.

Q : Sir, is this uranium enrichment project under the Atomic Energy Commission, or under the Defence.

A : It is not under the Defence; it is under the Atomic Energy Commission.

Q : Sir, in this context, may I ask whether Pakistan believes in a peaceful nuclear explosion? India, it may be recalled, has all along argued that a peaceful nuclear explosion is to be distinguished from the other form of explosion?

A : We have not considered our nuclear energy programme in terms of an explosion, whether peaceful or non-peaceful. We are not looking for a device that has to be exploded. Whether you give it the garb of a peaceful explosion, or a military explosion, an explo-

sion is an explosion. and you cannot differentiate a peaceful one from a non-peaceful one. I would still reiterate that our programme is peaceful, and it is for acquiring nuclear technology for our energy needs; and we will do whatever is necessary to achieve this technology.

Q: Personally, I can tell you that when China exploded its bomb, I remember writing a column entitled "If not a bomb at least a bang". So, I was wondering whether you were also thinking in terms of at least a bang, an underground nuclear peaceful explosion, if not a bomb?

A: No; we have a very modest programme of trying to enrich uranium by centrifugal process. We are in a very elementary stage and this, incidentally, will not give us a bomb. There are many other things required to produce a bomb, which we are not looking for. We are only working to acquire enriched uranium facilities, so that we can have light-water reactor. Since we know that it will not be possible for Pakistan to acquire, or order off the shelf, a light-water or a heavy-water reactor, or to get our uranium enriched from elsewhere, we are trying to stand on our own feet. It is a very modest programme of nuclear technology.

Q: Mr. President, I have already taken a lot of your time; but I have a few more questions. May I now turn to Afghanistan? How do you view, Mr. President, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan?

A: It has brought about a great qualitative change, which

India also accepts, I think. We should view it with grave concern. When 80,000 troops come and occupy neighbouring country, and instal a local regime there, then it is for both India and Pakistan to study its implications.

Q: Sir, does the Soviet presence in Afghanistan constitute a threat to Pakistan or, in your opinion, to the entire sub-continent; and how do you propose to meet the threat, or do you feel that the sub-continent needs to view it collectively and, also, meet it collectively?

A: It is a threat to the security of the whole region, and not merely to an individual country. Iran is next door to Afghanistan. It is as much a threat to Iran, as it is to India and to Pakistan. The borders will not then be on the Oxus river or at Landi Kotal, they will be at Wagah. So, I think, we ought to view this problem regionally.

Q: But how do you meet this, Sir.

A: There are two ways to meet it. One is military, the other political. We know that neither Pakistan, nor India can solve it militarily. Therefore, it should be solved politically, that is, by persuading the Soviets to realise that what they have done is wrong, and, therefore, they must vacate the country, restore the status of Afghanistan to that of a non-aligned state, let the Afghans decide their own fate, and let these fifteen lakh people, 1.5 million refugees, who are now on Pakistan soil, return to their hearth and home in honour and dignity.

Q: Sir, in this context, are you happy with the outcome of the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers' Conference?

A: Yes. The resolution passed at the Conference is extremely encouraging. We were suspecting that perhaps, there would be no mention of Afghanistan, because it would be difficult to reach a consensus. I must say that we admire the part played by the Indian delegation, and other delegations in persuading some countries who were unwilling to mention Afghanistan.

Q: Sir, where do we go from here? The UN Secretary General has now appointed a special representative. At one stage, the general impression everywhere was that Pakistan was willing to talk on bilateral basis to Afghanistan, and this is an impression which, I gather, was also collected by Mr. Waldheim when he met you at Taif; and yet, at Delhi, Mr. Agha Shahi said that Pakistan was not interested in bilateral talks, and the talks would have to be trilateral. So, what led to this change, or is there some misunderstanding in regard to perception?

A: A lack of communication! In my talk with Mr. Waldheim, there was never any mention of bilateral basis. Pakistan's stand has always been, from the beginning, on trilateral talks. We said, the representative of the political party from Afghanistan and the Foreign Ministers of Iran and Pakistan, under the auspices of the United Nations, will hold indirect talks. I told Dr. Waldheim that the UN Secretary General's representative will control the talks, that is, he will be in the chair and everybody will address him

and not each other directly. This helped to bring about flexibility in the Russian attitude, who were originally insisting on bilateral talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and Iran and Afghanistan.

Q : So, would Pakistan be receiving the UN representative at an early time?

A : He is most welcome at any time he likes. President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh has proposed a regional forum for the countries of the sub-continent. Pakistan has reportedly accepted the idea in principle, especially as our regional zone is without a grouping to promote greater mutual cooperation. What are your own views in the matter in the light of the experience of the EEC. Do you favour a summit on the subject and, if so, how soon?

A : We have been very categorical. When President Ziaur Rahman talked to me about it, I told him it was a very good idea. But I also suggested that we ought to proceed cautiously, because if all of a sudden six heads of state assembled together somebody might be allergic to someone raising some questions. I said it was better to prepare some groundwork, and start the talks at a lower level. When the West European countries started off negotiations, it took ten years for the EEC to be formed.

Q : Sir, the first meeting is proposed for early April, for the Foreign Secretaries. Has that been approved by you?

A : Yes, we are in favour of it.

Q : Sir, finally, on the internal front. You had initially said that you would hold elections within a certain period. You have postponed thrice. What are the reasons for the delay?

A : Let us look at the present conditions in the country. There is the Afghanistan problem on its western frontiers; 1.5 million Afghan refugees are on its soil; the political parties are dormant; and no clear-cut results will be in sight if the elections are held. Now, elections are not an end by themselves, but only a means to an end. At the present moment, the electoral means will not bring about a desired end. Hence, no elections for the time being. But I have been saying from the very beginning that I am for democracy, that is, for democracy with Islamic values; and there is no fundamental difference, nor any conflict, between the Islamic and the generally known democratic values. In fact, Islam is much more democratic than the so-called western democracy. In Islam, all citizens enjoy equal rights, and anyone can demand an explanation from even the head of state for the wrong he believes has been done to him. You have been lucky – and you know, I envy India in that respect – in that it has had three generations of leadership that came up, as we say in the army, through the mill. Unfortunately, soon after we got our independence, the Father of the Nation died; the Prime Minister was assassinated; and then there was political turmoil, leading to the first, the second, and now the third Martial Law. In other words, we have not been able to build the institutions. We are now engaged in the process of institutionalisation. The first thing we did was to establish democracy at the

grass-root level. After 15 years, we have held elections to the local bodies, and they have been functioning very effectively for the last year and a half. This will be the foundation on which to build the democratic structure. General elections will be held in due course; for the time being, I am for a greater participation of the people in running the affairs of the country until elections are held. Apart from an expanded cabinet that I have, I am bringing in a nominated Assembly – Federal Council or Majlis-e-Shoora – which will consist of a cross-section of people, including technocrats and representatives elected by their own professional bodies. They will act as a bridge between the people and the Government, and allow us to get to a pitch where we can hold general elections for a peaceful transfer of power from the military to the civil Government.

Q: Thank you very much; and, to conclude, when might we look forward to seeing you in India? We missed you on the occasion of the Centenary of St. Stephen's College, and many Stephanians are unhappy that here was the case of having a Stephanian as Head of the State, and he was unable to attend. Besides this, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in her recent letter, has sent you her very warm feelings, and said that so far India is concerned, it respects the integrity, sovereignty and independence of Pakistan, which is something that has not been stated by any Prime Minister before. This was the message which she sent to you recently. So, in reply to this message, what would be your answer regarding your visit to India and, secondly, your message to the people of India in the context of the mission which I want to promote ?

A : In the first place, I must take this opportunity of thanking your Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, for the very warm and friendly message that she sent us. We are very grateful, and we warmly reciprocate. As far as my college is concerned, I will be looking forward to visiting it, and also your great country, at the first opportunity I get. I wish you all success in your mission. I call it a crusade, in which I am your follower number one. It is you and I, like-minded people like us, who must get together and take this crusade to a successful conclusion, to eliminate the confusion, and the lack of confidence, and generate more enthusiasm and love and affection between the people of the two countries, so that they can live in peaceful conditions. They both need peace and tranquillity so that they can devote their energies and resources to development and welfare of the people. I hope you will be kind enough to convey my message to the people of India that, on this side of border, we have a lot of goodwill, a lot of love and affection for them. We are also keen to wash away the few stains that may be there in our relationship. I see a very bright future for India and Pakistan, if we, the leaders of both countries, can establish a better environment, a better understanding, and a better relationship between the two countries.

Q: What is really called for seems to be a confidence-building visit.

President : I grant you that. I wish you all the best, and hope that this first phase of the crusade is successful.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am more than grateful to you.

JOSEPH KRAFT

Joseph Kraft is an important American syndicated columnist. He visited Pakistan from March 5 to 14, 1981 and interviewed the President on 11 March 1981. He wrote three columns on his visit including the one based on his interview with the President (Daily News March 16, 1981).

Kraft has been writing for the Washington Post, the New York Times, Harper's magazine and Los Angeles Times.

He is the author of a number of books, namely 'The Struggle for Algeria', The Grand Design', 'Profiles in Power' and 'The Chinese Difference'.

INTERVIEW TO JOSEPH KRAFT AMERICAN JOURNALIST

11-3-1981

Interviewer: I'm going to be covering Afghanistan, US-Pakistan relations, the Persian Gulf, relations with India, democratisation, and overall foreign policy. Let us begin with Afghanistan. What is the state of war there now? Do you, or would you, call it a war even?

President: In our assessment, the internal situation in Afghanistan is not stable. There are over 90 thousand Russian troops in that country, and there are the Afghan forces and the Afghan Militia, most of whom have deserted; and it is with this ironhand and the help of the Soviet Union that the present regime is holding themselves. Again, to the best of our knowledge, the present regime has control only over larger cities; the rural areas, the interior, is still in the hands of the freedom-fighters.

Q: Some American officials, including the President and the Secretary of Defence, have suggested that the United States would be willing to help the freedom-fighters with supplies. Does it seem appropriate to you?

A: It should have been done long ago; but the point is, how would they do it? The only way they can do it is through Pakistan, and Pakistan cannot serve as a conduit of American military assistance to freedom-fighters.

Q : I understand the point, and would come to it in the second area of my questioning. Is there any particular type of weapons that you think the freedom-fighters most need ?

A : It all depends on how they wish to conduct their affairs, and who is incharge.....

Q : Is anybody incharge ?

A : There are about half a dozen of them, which is unfortunate. However, it does not require an expert to say as to what they would be needing because, in all insurgencies, the requirements are similar, whether it is Vietnam, or it is Afghanistan. In all insurgencies, it is the small guerilla actions which disrupt the normal life, and guerillas do not require heavy weapons.

Q : Would they need ground-to-air missiles, or is there something else they need in your view ?

A : What we hear is that the Soviet and Afghan elements are controlling the outskirts, and trying to suppress the insurgency, through gunships and aircraft. The freedom-fighters would, therefore, simply love to have ground-to-air missiles.

Q : Do you see any tension, in the guerillas, between maintaining the struggle against the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and searching for peace on the other? Does not the effort for peace pull the rug from under the people who are doing the fighting?

A : No; it does not. It didn't in Vietnam. The Vietnamese were talking to the French for five years; and to the Americans for six years.

Q : I am astonished by that comparison, Mr. President. Is that the kind of search for peace you have in mind, whether the Vietnamese did it for five or six years, protracted long negotiations that were clearly not designed to succeed?

A : No. By this comparison, I was just trying to stress that efforts for peace externally, and efforts of the freedom-fighters internally, could proceed simultaneously.

Q : Is it your impression, Mr. President, that the freedom-fighters favour this effort for peace ?

A : I do not know. But psychologically they should not; and I would be undermining their prestige if I claimed to be right. What I have in view is that they should be agreeable to the suggestion that, eventually, a political solution has to be found out. In the meantime, they are using military means to achieve that political end.

Q : What is the state of play at the diplomatic negotiations now? Which do you regard as the serious lines of negotiations, and which seem to you not very serious?

A : Nothing serious so far. We have approached the Soviets through the United Nations; the Soviets have made some overtures; the Non-Aligned Movement has

not been able to produce a dent in the issue; the United Nations' effort is dormant, because Kabul has certain conditions; and the Soviet offer to us is also dormant, because we have put forward certain conditions. So, no serious move has taken place so far.

Q: Did the Soviet Union mislead you a little bit into suggesting that they would solve it honourably and straighten it out?

A: No, they didn't. We knew that all they were trying was to get over the period which was highly unfavourable to them. There was the Islamic Summit coming in Taif, and the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi. After all, the Soviet Union is sensitive to world opinion. It wanted to avoid any condemnation of its action in Afghanistan at these two forums; hence the suggestion of a dialogue. That is my reading of the Soviet gesture.

Q: Do you see any reason to believe that they now want to withdraw their troops?

A: They say so, but I don't believe them.

Q: Let me move to the second point, which you already opened for me, which is the question of the modalities. Many, many Americans including, I think, the President and the Secretary of State, would like to enter into, or resume, the military relationship which we enjoyed in the past with this country and the question I want to ask you, first is: whether you think, in principle, that is a good idea. I would not go

into the '59 Agreement, but, in general principle, does it seem right to you that we should have a relationship that has a certain military component?

A : No; I would say that our military relationship should be subservient to our political relationship; and in order of priorities, we should emphasise economic assistance more than military assistance, because from past experience, we have learnt that pure military relationship is so transitory and so fragile that it does not stand the test of pressures when the time comes. Whereas, when a relationship is fundamentally strong, then military requirements flow from that relationship.

Q : What would be the right strategic context, or the right political context, for this relationship. Is the '59 Agreement important? Does that need to be strengthened or changed?

A : No; you see, I have a very straightforward view on the subject. No agreement is worth the paper it is written on, unless there is the spirit behind it. We have no written agreement with China; yet, for the last 20 years or so, and particularly during the last five years, we two have had one of the finest relationships. It is not possible to calculate the cost, in terms of dollars of the assistance they have given us in the military, economic, cultural, social, educational, and other fields, in order to make Pakistan stand on its own feet. What the Chinese have done to Pakistan can be compared to the Marshall Plan. From Pakistan's point of view, China is the most important country – not because it has given us aid, but much more so because

of our close proximity to each other, our geographical location, our past history; and these factors, in turn, are also important from China's point of view. As regards the United States of America, Pakistan's relations with it have to be perceived from the global point of view. A country of 80 million people is not so small, but it is not a big country either. It is not as big as India of 650 million people. However, it is a country located so strategically that it can play a dominant role in this region. We consider Pakistan as the backyard of the Gulf. Unless its backyard is safe, the Gulf is not safe, in my opinion. Today, the Soviet Union is only 350 miles from the warm waters, from the mouth of Hormuz. So, from my point of view, Pakistan can serve the cause of stability and peace in this region.

Q : That is why I came here. How does the United States fit in?

A : The United States of America should, first, view it in terms of their global interest. Are they interested in the Gulf? which they are, because President Carter said that they would go to war in case the Gulf was disturbed.

Q : Yes, we are interested in the Gulf.

A : The question that next arises is, are they interested in Pakistan? If they are, then I recommend that they should treat Pakistan on its own merits; that they should not get affected by what I call Indian allergies. India is a big country. Pakistan is not in competition with India; it is trying to improve its relations with

India. When the Americans consider their relationship with Pakistan, it should not be subject to veto by India.

Q: Let us suppose that Americans agree with that. I am not sure they do; but it could be put aside for the moment. I think there is a general recognition more than ever now that Pakistan is the frontline state in the Big-Power conflict. It is not clear whether you see the United States playing a strategic role in this country. It is not clear to many Americans what you want from the United States? It is not clear what kind of contacts do you want? I appreciate the point that it is not something written, but something between the poeple. But what is it that we are to have between us? I mean, will it be fair to say that one element clearly would be an understanding, if there was a Soviet attack on Pakistan, the United States would feel itself engaged; that is one element.

A: This is one thing we do not want. We, in Pakistan, are even more aware of the Super-Power rivalry. Pakistan cannot, and will not create a situation where the United States of America may have to face the embarrassment of deciding whether to go to war on behalf of Pakistan or not? We will never do this. But we must know the credibility and durability of our relationship with the United States of America, on the explicit understanding that Pakistan, after a long experience, has decided to be a non-aligned country.

Q: But, for example, would you want an American military presence in this country?

A : No, it is not necessary, Mr. Kraft. As I told Dr. Brzezinski, we are eighty million people, and we are not made of wax; we will not melt away; we will not be blown away. The Pakistan Army of four hundred thousand men in uniform, a very effective air force, and a reasonably good navy would not just sit idle and say, "Sorry, we cannot hold this country ourselves". No, we will never call the United States of America for military assistance in a hurry.

Q : You don't think it would be useful to have the American presence – a kind of plate-glass window – so that there would be no misunderstanding by the Soviet Union?

A : No; Pakistan does not wish to be so aligned to the United States of America that it should feel the necessity of stationing American troops on its soil.

Q : I mean, Germany, which has 65 million people – and they are pretty good soldiers – wants the guarantee, and has American troops.

A : Because Germany has not been allowed to be in that position militarily; so, it has got to bank on American support, but France would not.

Q : Could you indicate, in general, what kind of military assistance this country needs? I have spoken to some of your military officers, and I have the sense that they feel quite strongly that there is a need for modernisation in many areas. I don't want numbers, figures, but the kind of weapons, because that is important in talking to the Indians.

A : I think it will be wrong on my part to give you an indication as to what would be the requirements of Pakistan in terms of specific military assistance. The basic and urgent requirement of Pakistan, today, in the military field, is the development of infrastructure and facilities on the western front, because, as you put it, and know it, we are now a frontline state. We want to develop with the Soviet Union a friendly relationship as between two neighbours, but we do not want to compromise on principles. Even this hijacking that has taken place, is a price that Pakistan is paying for its principled stand on Afghanistan. Perhaps, we will pay a much greater price in the near future, or in the distant future.

Q : You were saying that the major new military need is for infrastructure on the western front. Would it be fair to say that you feel the need to transfer the bulk of your military effort from the eastern front to the western front ?

A : Some of it – not the bulk of it – can be transferred, if we have the required amount of infrastructure on the western front.

Q : Would you elaborate on that a little bit when you talk about infrastructure ?

A : By infrastructure, we mean roads, water supply, some accommodation facilities, electricity, wireless communications, and the like. You know, we are not mechanised enough for vertical mobility. Throughout, from Chitral right down to our border in Chaman and Quetta, this area has never been deve-

loped. There are practically no roads, no telephone communications, not even water supply facilities. We have a railway line going upto Landikotal, and one from Quetta towards Chaman, but these lines are in such a dilapidated condition that they cannot stand the strain of military operations. We have nothing in-between – from Parachinar onwards. There is a distance of only a few minutes, as the crow flies, between Landikotal and Parachinar, but one has to come all the way to Peshawar and turn like this. To go from Parachinar to Razmak, one will have to come all the way to Kohat, Bannu. So, throughout these thirty-three years of Pakistan, and before that in the British-Indian days, this side had never been developed.

Q: That is the long-term proposition, you are talking about.

A: Yes, but it is an immediate requirement also. It can be split into long-term and short-term measures. But unless we develop the infrastructure, we cannot possibly station the troops and armour required now to guard the western frontiers.

Q: But you don't think it would be intrinsically inappropriate for the United States to become a supplier of some military hardware needed by Pakistan?

A: It does not matter whether Pakistan gets ten extra aircrafts or ten tanks; I think it is the credibility and durability of the relationship that matters.

Q: You see we are a democracy; we change after four

years at least. We will also want some credibility and reliability and faith. Sometimes, when people tell me, the United States is not reliable, perhaps that's true; other countries are also not so. Anyhow, what are the kinds of things, the symbols, the gestures, the actions, that would provide the right context to you?

A : I personally have experienced two different contexts. There was President Carter, whom I met personally, and found that he had some reservations. There is President Reagan, whom I found to be very friendly, very open-minded, and somewhat concerned about Pakistan. So, I still fell that Pakistan, while remaining true to its membership of the Non-Aligned Movement, would appreciate its association with the United States of America based on trust and reliability. I do not think it matters what a country gets in terms of military hardware, or in terms of billions of dollars in economic aid, as does the extent of political and moral support.

Q : Let me then raise what I take to be the two sore points with respect to political and moral support. One is India.

A : Let me make it easier for you. There are three impediments. India is not the first one. The first one is our nuclear programme; the second one is a military regime in Pakistan, instead of a representative Government; and the third is India's allergy – I should say sensitivity – to the United States support to Pakistan.

Q : What would be the way to get out of the hurdle, as

you see it ?

A : To accept that Pakistan has the right of acquiring nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, particularly when we ourselves support nuclear non-proliferation. We are in favour of creating the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. We have proposed that there should be some treaty, or some facility, by which use of nuclear weapons should be prohibited at least in this region. So, when we ourselves are doing all that, I think the United States of America should, not doubt our claim that Pakistan is engaged in obtaining nuclear facility only for peaceful purposes.

Q : My own impression is that it would be much easier to deal with that subject with the present Administration.

A : Yes, very right.

Q : I think, it is the view of the present Administration, and I like you to comment on this, that if one creates the conditions for security, then the impulse to move towards nuclear weapons is diminished.

A : Naturally, yes. Not that we are moving, but it certainly is an incentive not to move in that direction.

Q : So, this drives me back, I guess, to the question of Pakistan's relations with India.

A : I have made it quite clear to Indian leadership and also, at least, in my talks with President Carter – and in what we have so far conveyed to the new Adminis-

tration in the United States of America – that we are not in competition with India, and that we will never be allergic to what the United States gives, or what type of relationship it has with India. I will never say a word about what India gets and from which source. It must be realized that Pakistan, in comparison with India, is a small country. There is just no comparison between 80 million people and 650 million people! In my talks with Madame Gandhi and with other Indian leaders, I have tried to convey that we are for very cordial and peaceful relationship with India. I have also told them that we have fought three wars, and both of us should have a good look at what we have achieved in the bargain. Whether the first shot was fired by Pakistan or India, that debate can go on for umpteen years, and it will never be settled as to who was to blame. What can be determined is, what is good now for India and Pakistan? As far as Pakistan is concerned, we are determined to have good relationship with all our neighbours, and more so with India.

Q: What are the things that the United States could be doing to reassure the Indians, to try to promote harmony, to make them see that Pakistan has now become Afghanistan, so to speak?

A: It may help, but I don't think India can be convinced so easily.

Q: That is a long-term aim?

A: To be very frank, for Pakistan to expect that the United States will not woo India is also wrong,

because, in the overall context of this region, India is a big country, a big power. Therefore, it must get due recognition. It may be a pro-Soviet state, but, from the point of view of their interests in this region, the Americans have to give it that much importance.

Q: Do you think, it is a pro-Soviet state?

A: Of course, absolutely. Although Madame Gandhi does not like to admit it, yet everybody knows, and it is quite evident, that India is a pro-Soviet state.

Q: Do you feel you have been making maximum efforts to build bridges to the Indians?

A: Yes, we have tried, and we are trying, through our open-handed policy towards exchange of visits, cultural delegations, trade talks, etc.

Q: If you will forgive a personal question. Does'nt it hurt things when you say as to how good your relations were with Morarji Desai?

A: I say so openly.

Q: I know; but Mrs. Gandhi's reaction. You have also said that she is allergic. I don't think that is the word she likes.

A: No, she does not like the word, and I see no reason why I should continue using it!

Q: Is there a reason why you should keep saying to her how you got on with Morarji Desai?

A : No; I found out that Madame Gandhi does not like this either. It does not matter how I feel, and what my relations with Morarji Desai have been. What matters now is for us to build bridges with Madame Gandhi, because she is at the helm of affairs, and that is what we are trying to do.

Q : Do you have plans, for example, for a summit meeting with her?

A : No, nothing so far; but if it comes off, I will be the first person to welcome it.

Q : Is the problem of Kashmir still a major obstacle?

A : Yes, it will continue to be a thorn in our relationship, till we solve it; and I hope we can solve it.

Q : Because one of the things the Indians have mentioned to me, something they don't like, is that various Pakistani officials, including yourself, Sir, have mentioned Kashmir in the same breath as Palestine abroad. Is that something you feel you have to do or.....

A : Not necessarily in the same breath. We can mention Palestine first, and Kashmir later, or Kashmir first and Palestine later. We associate Kashmir in the same manner as Palestine, but the mere fact that Palestine is occupied by Israel is a different aspect altogether and Kashmir under occupation of India with its own Prime Minister is a different story. I have mentioned Kashmir in the context of the failure of the United Nations to solve the problems of Palestine and

Kashmir. I said it in that order in my address to the UN General Assembly on behalf of the Muslims of the world. I did not mean that the Palestine problem is the same as that of Kashmir. They are two different issues, despite the outward similarity in respect of both Palestine and Kashmir being under occupation.

Q: An extremely important, in my view, a countryman of yours said to me recently that the Kashmir problem might become a little bit more easy in the wake of Afghanistan, because now in Afghanistan there was much spontaneous guerilla action against occupation, while there was very little in Kashmir.

A: Practically nothing. We admit that the Indian-occupied Kashmir is peaceful to the extent that it has a Government of its own. I have no reason to believe that Prime Minister Abdullah is a puppet of the Indian Government. If people are tolerating all this, why should I object? But what I object to is that Kashmir State remains a disputed territory. As far back as twenty-five years ago, it was decided in the United Nations by a majority vote that there should be a plebiscite in Kashmir, in order to let the people there decide their own fate. All that Pakistan is saying is: let the UN resolution, to which India was initially a party, be implemented. The Indian Government says that nobody should talk of Kashmir as it is India's internal affair. It wants us and the world to forget about the United Nations resolutions. Now, this is a bit hard to swallow .

Q: Can the Chinese play a useful role with the Indians? I mean, the Indians would like to have better relations

with China?

A: Yes, I am sure. We have suggested this to them, and the Chinese themselves realise the benefit of better relations with India. To the best of my knowledge, India is also working towards improvement of relations with China; and that would ease the tension in this region.

Q: Mr. President, this is a very favourable moment for you in the United States now.

A: I think so.

Q: The people would be trying to pay very close attention to you, much more than before, not because of the emergency; nobody is trying to do things in a hurry, because there is the general recasting, and I know you are reluctant to tell the United States what to do. It would help, I think, if we could get some clear idea of how you think we should be behaving with respect to the Indians. Is there a way that we can give you at least a few sticks of chewing gum? How can we possibly meet your military requirements, and yet keep the Indians...

A: It should not be difficult, provided India is approached in the manner we expect from the new Administration, that is, with as much as friendliness. India should realize that whereas it has purchased two hundred new Jaguars, Pakistan has not said a word, knowing that the Jaguar cannot fly from India as far as China, and that it certainly is not meant to be used against Bangladesh, or Sri Lanka, or Burma. I had

gone to the extent, Mr. Kraft, of asking India what, in its opinion, was the precise quantum of troops required for Pakistan's own security under the present circumstances, with the Soviet Union knocking at its doors. I told them I would accept their evaluation, and I would not ask how much they should have, or actually have, at present. I have not had an answer from them so far. It is not difficult for the United States to guess what India wants. I must tell you, Mr. Kraft, what India wants is a subservient Pakistan, which should remain constantly under Indian influence, like some of the smaller states, unfortunately, in the region at the present moment, who are nevertheless trying to assert their independence. Pakistan cannot accept that position. India should know that very well. Therefore, in order to establish friendly relations, Pakistan and India must recognise each other's defence needs. India is a big country, and must have larger forces for its defence to which Pakistan should not object. Similarly, India should not object to Pakistan having a force basically for self-defence, and not for launching major offensives, which it is not in a position to do. Let the two military establishments, of India and Pakistan, sit down together, and see what would constitute the basic quantum of forces for their respective security in the present circumstances.

Q: Let me go on to the other element that constrains our relations. As you said, this is a military regime. What kind of plans do you have for a peaceful transfer of power to the civilian control?

A: There is so much of tension in the political minds,

and so much of polarisation, that an election will tear the country apart at the present moment. But I have taken certain steps that are a prelude to democracy. For the first time in 15 years, local bodies elections have been held, and, mind you, this has been done by a military regime. Today, in Pakistan, we are proud to have elected representatives at the grass-roots, at the village level, at the district level, and, you can call it, at the county level. This is the basic foundation that we have laid. Our next step would be to introduce these elements at the provincial as well as at the federal level. At present, we are engaged in that process. I am trying to associate the people with the affairs of the Government. I have expanded the cabinet, and brought in more civilians, primarily those who have some political affiliations, not on party basis, but on their own individual merit. This shows my intentions of transferring power to the elected representatives at an appropriate time.

Q: Have you thought over the possibility of having a Presidential system ?

A: No, because the present constitution, the 1973 Constitution, which we have not abrogated and is still in existence, provides for a parliamentary form of Government. It is up to the elected representatives to change the form if they want to.

Q: It struck me that the way out of the dilemma for you would be to have a presidential election almost the way General de Gaulle did it. That way you yourself could become, perhaps, a legitimate ruler, so to speak. You could pass on the military to another

military person, and then you have a Prime Minister and an Assembly, and some of the party edge would be taken off. Does it appeal to your thought?

A: No. I came with a particular purpose, and it is not my intention to perpetuate my stay any longer than is necessary. I do not foresee for myself a political role on a long-term basis. I am particularly confining myself to the limits of the objectives for which I came, the moment those objectives are achieved, and I see them fulfilled, I would be looking for another person, or party, to take over the leadership of the country.

Q: Could we speak a little bit about the unrest and dissidence? How many people in about two or three weeks have been placed under arrest – political people.

A: I will not be able to give you the exact figure, but I think there are not more than 195.

Q: And how many students?

A: About six.

Q: Only six?

A: Yes, not more than that.

Q: I see. But you did close the universities.

A: Yes: we have closed some – the Punjab University, the Peshawar University and the Quaid-i-Azam

University; but there are others which are open, such as the Lahore Engineering University, the Karachi University, and the Sind University, while the Baluchistan University is to open on the 15th.

Q: My impression is that not a single party as a whole has condemned the hijacking.

A: No; because we have dissolved the political parties; so, as a party, none of them can speak. But, individually, practically everyone of them has condemned the hijacking.

Q: The PPP ?

A: Even the PPP. Some of the PPP elements have said that these hijackers have no association with them.

Q: I have understood that the two people that you were hoping to get into the cabinet, at one point, were Mr. Jatoi, and Mr. Kamal Azfar. Why were they unable to come alongwith you?

A: We wanted to associate Mr. Jatoi because, in my personal view, he is moderate, and his main qualification is that he is from Sind. But at a time when political parties are banned and he, being a politician, could not possibly come to us without having a political backing, we did not proceed further in the matter.

Q: So he is still on the wings ?

A: Yes, like all other politicians. We have not banned

PPP, nor taken any severe action against it so far, but now that the direct link between this hijacking and the disruptive forces of the PPP is so evident, we have detained certain individuals, who would be released if nothing is found against them.

Q: What did the hijacking tell you about the attitude of the Soviet Union towards this country ?

A: Not very friendly, I am afraid.

Q: What happened, you spoke to them ?

A: I could not get through on the telephone. We sent a message and got a very positive reply, saying that they were against hijacking; that it was an international crime; and that they would like this problem to be resolved. But, then, the next thing we found was that the aircraft had gone from Kabul to Damascus. We are very grateful to the free world, and many countries that I approached, for their very positive response. We are also very appreciative of the message that President Reagan and General Haig conveyed to the Soviet Union. It shows that such a crime cannot go unchecked in the international world.

Q: Why is it that the students are so hostile to this administration ?

A: I am sure, you are aware that in the world in general, and the developing countries, in particular, it is not the majority, but a small dissident minority that creates problems. Six students get out of the college, get hold of a bus, and try to put it on fire. Now, they

know that this bus does not belong to any hostile country; it is their own country's property; yet they just want to show their indignation by setting fire to it. The unfortunate part of it all is that they are a tool of somebody, and have been paid a few thousand of rupees to agitate.

Q: Let me revert to an event. There were, for six hours, student groups who sacked the American Embassy and did damage to it because of a false report. So far, as I know, no student did anything when the Russians invaded Afghanistan. Doesn't it say something to you?

A: I do not know whether the truth has come out, as far as burning of the American Embassy is concerned. I must confess it was my fault that the security forces were not available at that critical moment. They were, however, effective once they arrived on the scene, and got those seventy persons out who would, otherwise, have been burnt alive. Now, it so happened that, on that day, I decided to go on a round of the city on a bicycle without informing anybody before hand. The moment I entered the city, crowds of people converged on the place to see me. The entire police force of Islamabad and Rawalpindi was hurriedly assembled for my security, and it was in the midst of this bicycle ride to the city that news came that the Holy Mosque had been captured. Someone started this rumour, while one or two persons urged the crowd, which included several students from nearby colleges, to move to Islamabad. They went to the American Embassy, and set it on fire. The security troops were rushed to the Embassy. But the fire

had been started half-an-hour before they reached there. This unfortunate episode, at the same time, shows the deep emotional attachment of the people of Pakistan to Islam, and their intense devotion and reverence for the Holy Mosque. As regards, Afghanistan, you have no idea how much effort was required to prevent violent expression of opinion and demonstrations against the Soviet intervention in this Muslim neighbour. It is a double-edged weapon. If, today, the ban on political activities is lifted and people are allowed to demonstrate their wrath against hijacking or the Afghan regime, the Soviet Union, there will be widespread agitation and, in the process, the subversive elements will flourish, causing large-scale damage to life and property.

Q: Let me ask a question about something I don't know very much about. Do you feel that this Islamisation programme has made the Government popular, or unpopular, or neutral ?

A: I think, it has earned much respect for the present Govenment. I know, it is not a representative Government; but I also know that nobody has any doubts about its sincerity and devotion to Islam and its genuine efforts to initiate the Islamisation process in the country. In this, it has the support of the majority of Pakistanis, but not of the minority, which is against the ideology of Pakistan.

Q: Is that minority chiefly in the cities, the left wing, or the elite, or both ?

A: It is the intellectuals who are mostly in the cities. The

vast majority, 70 per cent in the rural areas, is for Islamisation.

Q: Positively attracted towards Islamisation?

A: Yes, positively. There can just be no doubt on that count. Incidentally, your article on the limits of Islam is.....

Q: You know this is the second time someone has mentioned it to me......

A: Because I have read it. It wasn't the title, but the name of the author, Joseph Kraft, that drew my attention.

Q: Maybe, I will find some other way to draw attention to myself! I don't even remember it, except that I know if I had to do it over again, I would do it in a different way. But I should also say that I have had the chance to talk to some of the people attending the conference, and to know what they have felt about the application of Islam here. Two things they have said: one, that it is extremely bureaucratic, being managed by people who run the Ministries and who have no sympathy towards it; and two, that it is quite slow and the things that they thought constituted the real test, like *Ushr,* have not been applied.

A: Yes, our critics do say that we have been a bit slow. I have been slow compared to what is going on in Iran. There was a revolution in Iran, whereas I am an advocate of an evolutionary process, which takes time.

Q: Why did it take this country thirty years to begin applying Islamic precepts? I mean, your beginning is a fairly modest one; but, for thirty years, they didn't even do that.

A: Yes, it is unfortunate. Two years after the creation of this country, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Objectives Resolution – consisting of twenty clauses – which affirmed that this country should be run in accordance with the basic principles of Islam. What difficulties the successive governments had in implementing this Resolution, it is very hard to say; perhaps, a lack of conviction in their own minds. The debate as to whether it should be a secular or an Islamic state, has been going on for a long time among the intellectuals. It is my conviction that, since Islam covers all aspects of life, Islamic values must be injected in the society, at all levels, without delay.

Q: Let me move on to a related subject, that is, the Persian Gulf. What is your sense about the security of the Gulf now? Is it secure, or is it very shaky ?

A: I would say that it is very significant that the Gulf States have decided that the security of the Gulf is their own responsibility, and this was the follow-up of the Taif Conference. There is complete unity among them, in this respect.

Q: Isn't that unrealistic? Isn't it sort of essential that some of the outside countries do something?

A: No. I don't think so. Even when they have to depend,

say, on the United States of America for equipment, on France for technical know-how, or on Pakistan for manpower, basically the security of the Gulf should remain the primary concern of the countries in the Gulf area.

Q: Do you think it would be wrong for the United States to try to acquire bases in the area?

A: Yes; unless there is a tacit agreement with the Soviet Union over the areas of interest.

Q: Would you like that?

A: No. I would be the last man to wish to have a second Yalta Agreement. It would generate Super-Power rivalry. For example, look at the Soviet Union sitting in Afghanistan. If counter-measures are taken by the United States of America, these may prompt the Soviet Union to move into Iran, or Pakistan, or the Straits of Hormuz.

Q: Didn't the Russians move into Afghanistan because we were doing nothing?

A: Yes.

Q: So, isn't it the lesson of Afghanistan that we should not be sleepy; we should not be flat; we should be alert. Let me go on further, and put the case very, very strongly. Isn't it naive to believe that a place as valuable as the Gulf can be protected by countries which are fragile? Isn't it almost axiomatic that one of the Big Powers is going to come in if the other

doesn't move under any circumstances. Shouldn't the United States move to pre-empt, rather than fall sleep and let the Russians in? Isn't that the real choice?

A : Yes: but I would leave the choice to the United States of America.

Q : But if we decide that we should be alert and firm, that would not bother you too much ?

A : No, it will not, because that is what the American interest would demand; because I feel that the United States of America has the right, like anybody else, to look after its own interests. In the past, we know, that it did not pay to safeguard the United States' interests in the region, or elsewhere in the world, because of the obvious vacuum created by laxity on the part of the United States.

Q : Is it your impression, Sir, that the Saudis will welcome stronger American posture in the area ?

A : I am afraid, I will not be able to comment on this. I know that the Saudis are very much concerned about the Gulf and they are playing a very dominant role, not only in the Gulf, but in the Muslim World.

Q : The role that Pakistan can play – you said, this is the backdoor of the Gulf, a striking phrase – this country can play quite an important role in steadying the regimes there. Is it not correct ?

A : We have very good relations with all the Muslim countries, more so with the Gulf because they are

next door to us. Pakistan has offered its help and services in any form or manner the Gulf countries may like to obtain, on the understanding and condition that, basically, the security and integrity of the Gulf is their own responsibility.

Q: You also have a much more professional and adept military establishment.

A: We are very proud of our armed forces.

Q: I know there have been reports, which you denied, about two divisions in Saudi Arabia.

A: That is false.

Q: Surely false, and that would not make any sense to me. But what would make sense to me would be the force of the size of a Brigade.

A: No, that is also false.

Q: And you are not contemplating that?

A: No. All we have in Saudi Arabia are some advisers, some instructors, some technical assistants and about a thousand engineers who are helping in road construction and other works of a military nature. In this respect, we have a protocol between our two countries on the basis of bilateral relationship.

Q: I think, some Americans believe that the security problem, the most acute security problem in the Gulf is the problem of a *coup d'etat* in Saudi Arabia. You

don't think so?

A : No. You have been to Saudi Arabia many times. You must have noticed the development that has gone on in that country—the comforts of life that everyone enjoys, the house one can build; education, medical facilities, trade and commerce. I see no reason why the people of that country should be against the regime. In my opinion, it is a very benign regime, and Saudi Arabia is on a very safe wicket.

Q : Do you think that Iran and Iraq have, sort of knocked themselves out as potential dominant Powers in the Gulf now?

A : I would say this much that, from my recent experience, both are very keen on peace; both want to find a solution to the problem. The difficulty is only in the modalities and, of course, they have their own principles. We have made certain proposals for bringing them together, so that the war can end. We will continue in our efforts to find a peaceful solution.

Q : But do you think either one of those countries would be in a position to assert a dominant influence in the Gulf again? You referred to the fact that there was unity of the five Gulf states, but the unity of the five can take place only because the other two are out of the game.

A : I am sure that if peaceful conditions prevail, then Iran and Iraq will also play a dominant role in helping the countries of the Gulf, Iran has a population of 35

million, Iraq 17 million, and both have strong armed forces.

Q: Let met ask you one final question about the general foreign policy – orientation and modality – of this country, because I think it is something that baffles the Americans. We have the impression that, under your leadership and even before when Mr. Bhutto was here, this country has come to attach tremendous significance to the United Nations, to the Non-Aligned Group, to the Islamic Organization. We wonder if those are appropriate vehicles for the main concentration of the foreign policy of a frontline state. We ask ourselves: "Are those the connections that Pakistan really needs? Do those connections help Pakistan against the real danger on the western front?"

A: Every country draws its conclusions from its own experiences, and so does Pakistan. The pillars of our foreign policy are based on Pakistan's association with the Muslim World, because we find that is the vehicle which can help Pakistan in fulfilling its role as the first country in the world that was created on the basis of an ideology. Israel came a year later. So, our affiliations with the Muslim World are fundamental. The second pillar of our foreign policy is our link with China, and China is not a Muslim country. We want that these two associations should develop through the agencies of the Non-Aligned Group and the United Nations, because we believe in the freedom of each individual country to pursue its internal and external policies as it chooses. I think the lesson that we have learnt in the last 33 years is that had we

followed the Austrian pattern, and avoided that of Finland, I feel that in the interest of the Free World, and in the interest of Pakistan's own integrity and security, we must follow a non-aligned, independent foreign policy, and develop bilateral relations with the other countries, and work through the vehicle of the United Nations for the unity of the world.

Interviewer : Mr. President, you have been very, very kind, and very, very generous.

President : Thank you.

RICHARD S. EHRLICH

Richard S. Ehrlich, who holds a Master's degree in journalism and won the University's Foreign Correspondent Award, joined United Press International in Hongkong in July, 1978. He was transferred to UPI's New Delhi Bureau in January 1980 and covered the developments in the region, particularly the war in Afghanistan.

He visited Pakistan as a UPI correspondent and interviewed the President on 12 March 1981.

Before coming to Hongkong and New Delhi, he travelled extensively Asia, Africa, Europe and South America and visited Pakistan, India, Iran, Turkey, Nepal, Burma, Loas, Indonesia, the Philippines, Egypt, Israel, Tanzania, Kenya and Mexico.

INTERVIEW TO
RICHARD S. EHRLICH
U. P. I.

12-3-1981

Interviewer: Why did you decide to accept the hijackers' demands?

President: What weighed in the mind of the Cabinet, which took the decision today, was that we were very positive that the hijackers would not blow up the plane while it was standing on Syrian soil, nor would the Syrians allow them to do so. Far more important than that was our concern for the 102 passengers on board, whose safety and security were threatened for no fault of their own; and their safe passage in a PIA plane was the responsibility of the Government of Pakistan. Having made all possible efforts, and failed to influence either Syria or the hijackers, we thought of taking a more benign and humane attitude in a bid to save the lives of the 102 passengers, although we realised its implications for the future of hijacking in Pakistan in particular, and the world at large. But our options seemed closed when we got very little response from the two countries, Afghanistan and Syria, to which the plane had been hijacked. On the whole, I am quite satisfied with the decision we took and, I think, it would at least help in lessening the crisis we have been facing over the last ten, twelve days.

Q: Now, you are talking about the implications which we both understand as far as dealing with hijackers is concerned. In this, in a way, the hijackers took the

plane and said that we want so many prisoners released; you bargained for a while and, finally, whatever the reason, released the prisoners. We know that they have killed people. We know that we are not dealing with typical hijackers. But isn't this, in the last analysis, in the hijackers' world, a success? They took plane, asked for the prisoners, and got them.

A : Yes, it is quite obvious. But, in my opinion, there is something more than the act of the hijackers, which needs to be understood.

Q : Which is that ?

A : Which is that they could'not have done this without the assistance of some foreign elements. So, if it was a case of simply hijacking a plane, then I would have called it a success for the hijackers. But when the hijackers are being instigated, and helped by an outside power in trying to embarrass the Government of Pakistan, then it is not so much the success of the hijackers, as you know.....

Q : I am stationed in New Delhi, and Mrs. Gandhi also talks occasionally about the foreign hand and foreign elements, and that always drives the reporters crazy. But we need to know which country ? Who, in this case, are the foreign elements ? Afghanistan ? Who ?

A : Well, there is no doubt about Afghanistan's connivance, and, to some extent, encouragement from the Soviet Union.

Q : Anyone else ?

A : No, I don't think so.

Q : What help or advice, or whatever, did you get from America in this ? Did President Reagan talk with you ?

A : I am grateful to the United States Administration. They helped us all along, in whatever way they could, in impressing upon the Governments concerned – and also the Governments not directly connected with this – in stressing upon them the need and necessity of an early settlement. We are very grateful to President Reagan.

Q : Did you sort of sit around, and think about the strategy, which should be followed ?

A : No. We just asked them to bring political pressure to bear upon various Governments, which they did very successfully.

Q : Now, isn't it, in the recent history of Pakistan's political opposition – there have been rallies and demonstrations and street fighting – certainly a new step in the sophistication of the Opposition ?

A : Yes, it is. Gangsterism has been brought into politics. The politics of violence has achieved a new dimension, which certainly is not appreciated in the world, I am sure. We have now to be careful, look into its various other aspects, and take pre-emptive and precautionary measures.

Q: It is the worst case in the area. You have the deadline now. They didn't like whatever thing you came up with; 55 or 92, or whatever. They wanted more and more, and started shooting people, one after every hour, a horrible scenario. What is the most powerful response that Pakistan was keeping in reserve? Were you going to bomb them? What was the alternate weapon that Pakistan could have unleashed against the hijackers?

A: We could have got the passengers released within 24 hours, had the (Kabul) Government cooperated with us, or had they allowed us to use our own means.

Q: You mean, the Government of Afghanistan?

A: And Syria, both.

Q: And how could you have got the release within 24 hours?

A: Well, we had the instruments for that.

Q: I have to ask, which are those instruments?

A: We cannot show our hand at this stage. We may have to face another one.

Q: All right, I understand. But, just to be vague, did that include armed military action?

A: Yes. It included all possible actions – armed action; some peaceful action, with or without the help of the local elements.

Q : What is it about the Opposition – are they getting more and more desperate to launch such things?

A : No. I think there is a small minority that has been trained outside Pakistan for acts of terrorism, which is not new to the Third World, or some of the other countries of the world. The idea is to embarrass the Government, and to create a sense of insecurity within the country by such acts of violence. We know these three hijackers, and where they had been trained, and who trained them? We have received all that information.

Q : What did the hijackers want the Government of Pakistan to do?

A : So far what we have heard is that they want the Bhutto family to have the hereditary right to rule Pakistan.

Q : Fine. How do you perceive yourself among the people of Pakistan? Do you think you are something of a popular leader, or are you interested in that?

A : No, I have never been interested in that. All I want for myself is to be able to make a humble contribution, being at the place where I am, so that I can serve my country and achieve, in the shortest possible time, the goals I have set for it.

Q : Again, we are talking about Third World countries – comparing Government systems. Why is it that in India, for example, democracy is working when in Pakistan, for some reasons, it cannot? What is it

about Pakistan that it cannot have democracy now, whereas India can? They are similar.

A : In India, the circumstances are much different. Where Indians have an edge over us in politics is that they have had three generations of politicians who went through the mill by the time independence was achieved. We started off almost as the first generation. They have had a father and daughter ruling the country continuously for 25 years, which is a long time. We lost Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Founder of the Nation, and the first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, shortly after independence. There have not been many men of stature in the country since, nor has politics been able to take root and grow naturally. We have had, during peace time, conditions which paved the way for a succession of Martial Laws. Whereas there may be a lot of similarity, in physical and social environment, and thinking also to a certain extent, the form of politics and the political experience of the two countries have been different.

Q: Now, I am still a bit vague on the details of how these 55 are going to be released ?

A : This has yet to be settled. We have posed the problem to President Assad. We still do not know how the Syrians would respond, and what modalities the would work out. We are hoping to hear from them anytime.

Q: Right. Going back to India, it seems like Mrs. Gandhi you too, ultimately want to sit down and talk one

day.

A : I certainly do.

Q : Do you think, you will set a date? I mean, this week, or within ten days, would you like to talk?

A : Mrs. Gandhi and I met in Salisbury, and we talked. We shall talk again whenever there is an opportunity, inside or outside the country.

Q : What about setting some sort of a date, through this story in the media, saying "I would like to talk to you on March 23".

A : All I want to convey is that, as always, I have respected the lady because she is the head of the Indian Government, and we wish to improve our relations with India. I'd consider it a matter of great pleasure to have talks with her at the first opportunity.

Q : What is the first opportunity? I mean, she talks of the first opportunity, and you also talk of the first opportunity.

A : I will give her a ring sometime, and find out what would be that first opportunity, and then we would decide.

Q : And when do you give her this ring?

A : In due course of time.

Q : Why aren't you doing it tonight, or something? What

is preventing you?

A: Nothing at all. We have had talks on the telephone a number of times; we have exchanged letters. We are now on good terms.

Q: Right. Which seems to be the biggest stumbling block between the two countries?

A: You know, it is the Kashmir issue, and it can be resolved.

Q: Going back to the hijacking. Was this your idea from the beginning that we go back and forth, let us give them 55; or did you have another plan that they finally thought you were....

A: We have proceeded quite systematically, according to plan.

Q: Now, you said you would only release 15, and you would consider another 31, that would be 46. The other forty-six you have never considered, saying they were hardened criminals.

A: The 15, we said we would release, are those who are not involved in any serious crime. The 31, we said, are not traceable; we do not know their whereabouts; if we have more details about them, their parentage, their domicile, etc., then we could also review their cases and find out as to how many of them could be released. This was out of a list of 92. The present proposal is based on the list of 55 that the hijackers had submitted to us on the 10th of March.

Q : You don't call them political prisoners; you just call them convicted criminals.

A : Well, to our way of thinking, a person who commits a murder; who burns a bus in which several people get killed; who throws a bomb, and a few children lose their lives; he is a criminal. Individuals who indulge in acts of violence; cause deliberate loss of life, and inflict physical injury, cannot be political workers. A political worker goes out and agitates; he takes out a procession; he makes a speech, that is the extent of a political worker's activity. But a person who is in jail for committing criminal offences, like killing and causing bodily injury, from my point of view, is not a political prisoner.

Q : How many political prisoners are there in Pakistan ?

A : Not many, I would say; I think 185 to 195. When I say political prisoners, I mean political prisoners.

Q : I am a journalist, of course; and my interest is freedom of the Press, naturally. Now, what is it that cannot allow freedom of the Press in Pakistan.

A : Currently, we are trying to work out, in consultation with the journalists, some organisation or forum for taking irresponsible newspapers or newspapermen to task, instead of resorting to punitive action against them.

Q : But they have laws concerning them in America.

A : We will introduce those once our current dialogue

with the journalists is concluded.

Q : Coming back to the hijacking. How did these guys get on board through Karachi security ?

A : We are trying to find that out. There are many agencies involved when a plane is being readied – the cleaning staff, the catering staff, the engineering staff and, of course, the security staff. Then, there are the passengers themselves proceeding to board the plane.

Q : Ronald Reagan recently said that he would consider aiding the Afghan Mujahideen with military weapons, and he said, they are not rebels, but freedom-fighters. This implies that he is considering sending a lot of weapons to them. Some are trickling into Pakistan, but not enough to make a big difference to the Russians. Now, you have said before that you don't want Pakistan to be conduit for weapons for Mujahideen. Is that an inflexible position or are you going to change?

A : That is a firm and very positive stand. Pakistan cannot act as a conduit for weapons for the freedom-fighters, unless and until Pakistan itself, which is acting as a sanctuary for Afghan refugees, is strengthened.

Q : Right, and then you can act as a conduit.

A : And then one could consider whether it is desirable to act as a conduit, or there could be some other possibility.

Q: What do you mean by strengthened? What would you need to be strengthened, to what point?

A: Well, it is important for both the countries – the United States of America and Pakistan – first to consider how they can establish a relationship which is credible and durable. Everything then flows from it. The security of a country does not depend entirely upon how many guns and weapons or aeroplanes it has; but upon its internal strength; its economic strength; its military strength and the support it has from the outside world – in that order of priority. It is, in this context, that the security of Pakistan has to be viewed.

Q: What kind of figures would you like to offer for Pakistan, as far as economic and military aid is concerned? Is it in millions, or billions, or trillions?

A: We have no price tag.

Q: And what do you have?

A: Just simple, credible and durable friendship.

Q: What does it mean, you don't want any American aid?

A: No; as I have just explained, from my point of view, dollars, guns, ships, aircraft are meaningless.

Q: What is meaningful for you is more trust and relationship between the two countries?

A : That is right.

Q : Now, do you see, the political opposition in this country gaining ground, staying stagnant, or declining, let us say in the last year?

A : Since we have put a clamp on political activity; it is very difficult to judge precisely; and these isolated acts are no barometer of political activity. But, I think, we are on a fairly firm footing to carry out our programme.

Q : As a world leader, you obviously know all pros and cons of every political decision that you make? How do you feel running the country in which you have put a clamp on political activity, you have imposed Press censorship, and such things? Do you think it is necessary? Now the years are going on, and it is still there.How does that feel to you, I mean radically?

A : We do not have a rigid mind on such issues. We are continuously reviewing our position, particularly on two issues – political activity and Press freedom; and, sooner or later, I think, both these will have greater scope than they have now.

Q : And when would you step down, or when would you like another person to run things? You haven't really indicated who is next in line? Whom would you like? What political person do you admire in Pakistan?

A : There is no dearth of them, and they all have equal rights; it is not up to me to choose my successor.

Q: Who are your heroes ?

A: In what respect ?

Q: In this life. Do you have heroes? Who are they ?

A: There are personalities for whom I have great regard – Napoleon, MacArthur, Salahuddin Ghazi, Aurangzeb, Jamaluddin Afghani and coming to the present time, the great leader and founder of this country, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. A majority of the books I have, are biographies of great leaders.

Q: And when you were a kid, did you ever conceive of running Pakistan ?

A: I never expected to be President of Pakistan.

Q: What sort of things, ideas or careers, were you thinking of when you were young ?

A: I joined the Army with a full sense of responsibility, and I thought if I could go up to a particular rank, I would have done well; but, in fact, I have done much better than what I expected.

Q: And what would you like to do in the next ten years or so ?

A: After I have achieved my objectives, and introduced real democracy in the country, I will hand over to a good successor.

Q: There is another question about the hostages. Jimmy

Carter had his hostage crisis. Is this, your hostage crisis, in that respect? It is much briefer, I know.

A : It has been a crisis all right, but I hope we don't meet the same fate .

Q: And how do you compare Reagan with Carter? I mean, obviously they are completely different people ?

A : I think it will not be right for me to compare the two. I have met President Carter and, I tell you, he is a lovable man. I have not met President Reagan, but I have talked to him on the telephone, and I have exchanged a few letters with him. I think, he is an equally remarkable man. So, when people elected President Carter, I am sure they gave their votes to a man who, in their opinion, was an outstanding figure. Similarly, they have elected President Reagan now. I consider both of them as great personalities. We expect the new Administration to have a better understanding of this region, and take decisions which, while in the interest of the United States of America, can also be beneficial to some of their allies like Pakistan.

Q : What seems to have been lacking in America's relationship with Pakistan in this region ? I mean, it needs improving, in what respects ?

A : There has been some misunderstanding over our nuclear programme, which has got unnecessarily projected as if we were making a bomb. We are equated with India, which we do not want to be;

India is a much bigger country. These are some of the misunderstandings. But, I hope, they will be removed, because we have had very good relationship with the United States of America eversince the independence of Pakistan.

Q: America views you and Thailand as its last allies in the continental Asia.

A: We are proud of our relationship, and we hope we can develop it again.

Q: I have written a piece in which, recently, I praised you for being very shrewd about the way you defused the Opposition without creating more agitation. You have been walking a tight rope very very successfully. I was very impressed by it. If there is a political Opposition leader, I guess that would be Benazir Bhutto, who is said to be lively and a fire-brand. Is there a possibility to patch things up between you and her? I am not saying that you are in agreement with her?

A: I am prepared to compromise with anybody for the good of Pakistan, provided we have the same concept of Pakistan's ideology. I will have nothing to do with anyone, however dear or near to me, who has a different concept.

Q: What do you mean a different concept?

A: Anybody who thinks that Pakistan should be a secular state, or a socialist country, or it should have nothing to do with Islam.

Q: And you are not going to exchange ideas?

A: I have an open mind. I have never kept enmity in my heart against anybody. But I have my principles to which I adhere.

Q: If the elections were held tomorrow and everyone could run and be elected, will you be re-elected? Will Mrs. Bhutto be elected? Who will be elected?

A: I can tell you, I will not be standing.

Q: If you were standing? If they just say they like you, do you think you have enough popular support?

A: I will not boast about myself.

Q: You are very humble. So, who would be standing?

A: It all depends. We have had very good experience of the local councillors – democracy at the grass-root level. I think, they have shown a great sense of responsibility, and brought about considerable results just in about a year and a half since they were elected. If we build from this base to the next tier and so on, I am sure, sound democratic leadership will come up.

Q: Coming back to the hijacking. Why did they shoot Tariq?

A: There are three versions of the hijackers' motive. First, they shot him because he was a former military officer; secondly, because he was ADC to Mr. Bhutto;

and, thirdly, which is the most plausible reason in my opinion, he was the person who saw Murtaza Bhutto coming on board and recognised him. Nobody else could recognise Murtaza Bhutto. I think he was eliminated as a possible future witness to prove that it was Murtaza Bhutto.

Q: Now, we had an air hostess come off the board in Damascus. Did she say Murtaza Bhutto was on board?

A: We haven't been able to ask her this question; but we do not know whether she could recognise him or not?

Q: Right; and who are the hijackers?

A: We have established the identity of two of them – one is Salamullah Khan Tipu, and the other Nasar Jamal. About the third one, we have got....

Q: Somebody named Butt.

A: Some say he is Butt; others say he is somebody else. There are two or three names.

Interviewer : I thank you very much.

President ; Thank you.

FAROOQI

Farooqi of the Impact International, London, who came to U.K. from Karachi in 1963 as a free-lance journalist, took over as the founder editor of the Journal in 1971.

The Impact has reasonably good circulation in the Middle East countries.

As a free-lance journalist, most of his despatches used to be published in Saudi Arabia daily 'The Al-Madina'.

Farooqi interviewed the President of Pakistan on 12 March 1981.

Farooqi has been associated with the Pakistan Movement and was an active member of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation. He graduated from Agra University in 1950.

INTERVIEW TO FAROOQI IMPACT, LONDON

12-3-1981

Interviewer : Mr. President, you have laid down four main tasks for the new Cabinet the other day, i.e., to step up the enforcement of the Islamic system; to create conditions in which a representative Government can be inducted; to accelerate economic development; and lastly, to develop contacts with the masses. Please, can you explain more precisely how these tasks are to be fulfilled?

President : We have instituted such religious bodies: the Ulema Convention and the Mashaikh Convention, and enlarged the scope of reforming the Council of Islamic Ideology, to formulate recommendations, for consideration of the Cabinet, in order to speed up the process of Islamisation. Now, executive and legal measures can facilitate this process up to a point. For creating an Islamic society and environment, a combined individual and collective effort is needed. In other words, what is required is not merely a physical replacement of the system inherited from the British, but a complete change of outlook; and it will take that much of time for the process of Islamisation to be completed. As regards the introduction of democracy, my concept of democracy is a little different. Democracy to me does not mean so much the rule of the majority, as the quality of the representatives of the majority. In my opinion, in a Muslim country, a representative, who participates in any

capacity to run the affairs of the state, must first himself be the torch-bearer of Islamic values. So, we should lay down certain qualifications for those who wish to be members of the legislature. We should, next, determine the modalities of choosing them. Should they be chosen on individual basis, or on party basis? If the latter, what is the party's concept and programme in terms of Pakistan's Islamic Ideology? We are trying to work out these lines on which we want to develop a democratic system in the country. In the meantime, we are building representative institutions at the grass-root level. Local bodies elections were held about a year and a half ago on adult franchise, but on non-party basis. We have found that majority of these local councillors are patriotic, and keen to work for the progress and welfare of their constituents. They have done a tremendous job so far. We want to strengthen these local bodies, so that a firm foundation is laid for holding elections to provincial and national legislatures. In due course of time, I think, we will hold the elections.

Q: We have a framework of a kind of democracy in the 1973 Constitution which has not been abrogated. So, how would this relate to the new kind of democracy which you have in mind ?

A: We will probably amend the 1973 Constitution to the extent necessary to achieve our aims and objectives.

Q: Can you give some details about how this democracy will work? What structure, what form it would have?

A : I do not foresee any radical change, except in respect of qualifications of candidates standing for elections. I do not visualise any change in the method of election, nor any possibility of literacy becoming a pre-condition for roting. I am just bringing in such elements as would help inculcate responsibility in our democratic system.

Q : Would you have proportional representation ?

A : If elections are held on non-party basis, then the question of proportional representation does not arise. But if it is on party basis, then proportional representation may be considered.

Q : Does that mean Pakistan would not have any political party under the new system ?

A : No, not necessarily. I have not yet decided on this issue, but I am viewing it in the context of prevailing polarisation and antagonism among the parties. They themselves are so much at daggers drawn with one another that no single party can win and, eventually, there would have to be some kind of multi-party alignments. Then, why not do away with the parties for the time being, for the first general elections? Let the individuals be elected on personal merits, and, once they come in the Assembly, like minded people can form their own group, which can be in power, and the others can form Opposition group. From then onwards, a party system could be developed. Whether there will be two parties, or three, or more, it will be for members of the new legislature to decide. If they cannot do this, and there are numer-

ous parties, then the conditions laid down by us in 1979, for the general elections, could be followed. In 1979, all political parties were required to register themselves, show their credentials, their manifesto, their financial position and its source etc. Those who registered, and held their party elections, would qualify to participate in the general elections under the system of proportional representation.

Q: In the event of a controversy, how do we decide about the legitimacy or the acceptability of this new system?

A: Maybe, at some time, I put this as a package proposal to the nation, and ask the people's opinion through a referendum; that is a possibility.

Q: The system you have in view—what kind of accountability for the chief executive, it is going to have? That is also very important from the point of view of democracy.

A: The chief executive should also be elected by the House and answerable to that House. I am not thinking that the Chief Martial Law Administrator should be the chief executive. After the elections, it would be the Leader of the House.

Q: You mentioned, in our last interview, about your idea of amending the Constitution with a view to giving a role to the Armed Forces, in order to safeguard against the future.

A: Yes, I did mention it, and I still have that in mind. We

must accept the reality. We have had three coups. So, we must accept the reality of the Armed Forces remaining a very stable factor in Pakistan.

Q: Do you mean to say that this is a *de facto* thing, and the nation must submit to that?

A: No; it is the reality; three times already, the Armed Forces brought the country back on the rails. Therefore, instead of another, fourth, Martial Law, following a civilian rule, why not legitimise the role of the Armed Forces, through legal means, in stabilising the country's political processes, and assisting the civilian governments?

Q: Without necessarily committing yourself to a kind of statement, can you indicate when and how you visualise Pakistan returning to political normalcy?

A: In about two years' time, *Insha' Allah.*

Q: You made a very important statement by saying that you are not opposed to democracy. You also said that your aim was, and is still, the introduction of democracy. Do you exclude the possibility of yourself forming a political party?

A: I have not given it a thought so far.

Q: You were invited by one party to . . . . .

A: Yes, but I did not accept it.

Q: There is one feeling which is very predominant; that,

no matter how high and noble your objectives, these do not seem to get the necessary backing of the machinery which is responsible for their implementation. How do you deal with it? I mean, you started with cleansing the administration and political life. So, how do you mean to reform or reconstruct, and create a machinery for the Islamic polity which you are introducing.

A : I am at it. The cleansing process is going on; but to reform characters, and to reconstruct systems on sound foundations takes a long time.

Q : So, it means training, recruitment procedure ?

A : Motivation, environment, starting from home, and then at school, what they teach them in Islamiat; what importance they attach to Islamic learning? All this implies a long process. So, it takes time. But even today, I think, there is a definite, distinct trend towards.......

Q : If I may say so, this may be due to your personal example; but I am talking about institutionalising the change of attitude in the administration. Our administration is not service-oriented; I mean, it is authority-oriented.

A : I don't think we can bring in a violent change in this respect, but an orderly change, mind you, is already taking place.

Q : The Western Press is giving rather a very alarming picture of the internal political situation. Last month,

you mentioned about some foreign involvement in this thing. What is your own appreciation of the situation?

A : You see, basically Pakistan is a thorn in the way of the dominant influence in the area of a particular power. We have taken a very firm and principled stand on the Afghanistan situation. This has not been appreciated, and Pakistan is being subjected to subversion and, if not dismemberment, at least destabilisation. We know certain governments are supplying money to help their agents in this country. Take for instance, the action of the hijackers. They have been trained abroad, and provided material assistance to carry out their nefarious plan. A lot of money is being poured into bribe to induce such elements to resort to violence, subversion and coercion.

Q : This incident of hijacking, do you think, marks some kind of a trend towards urban terrorism in Pakistan?

A : Not urban terrorism. This is purely a political party creating gangsters for terrorisation, and so on.

Q : Now, in Pakistan, I have been talking to people, and one gets the feeling that they tend to inform themselves either through rumours, or through the same western media I mentioned earlier. Don't you think it will be more rational to replace the present censorship with something like a code of conduct, or a Press code, and to prosecute those who actually transgress the limits of dissidence and criticism.

A : We have worked out a system on these very lines, and it is just a question of the final agreement being reached between the Government and the Press, and, soon thereafter, it will be introduced.

Q : Now, two years after, is it possible to evaluate the progress in Islamisation which has been achieved and to identify the bottlenecks; and also to indicate the future line of Islamisation ?

A : We have enforced several laws, introduced a number of reforms, and brought Islam to the stage where it should really have been long ago. People are proud of being Muslim, proud of offering their prayers in congregation, and there is the general kindred spirit among Muslims. We are particularly proud that the younger generation is very much alive to Islamic values. However, there are a lot of impediments yet to be overcome. For instance, while we have enforced the Hudood Laws, we also have normal courts dealing with cases according to the existing laws. We have empowered the Session Judges to try Hudood cases, but they have yet to familiarise themselves with the basic knowledge and procedure of Islamic jurisprudence. We have set up an institution to impart such knowledge and training in legal procedure to functionaries concerned with handling Hudood cases.

Q : Some people feel that the right priority would have been to go first into social welfare aspects of Islam, rather than punishment under the Hudood Laws.

A : Social welfare covers a much wider field. It took us a long time to introduce just one Islamic element of

social welfare, that is, *Zakat*. When one talks of social welfare, it means a whole range of welfare facilities - hospitals, clinics, schools, homes for the blind, homes for the orphans, homes for the poor, and so on.

Q : Now, coming to security and foreign policy issues. How do you sum up Pakistan's present security situation ?

A : There is a very distinct security risk on our western flank, and the usual security risk on our eastern flank. In order to meet both the risks, normally, Pakistan would require enormous resources, which it hasn't got. So, we are trying to meet the situation diplomatically, politically, economically, and militarily. Militarily, we are trying to strengthen the armed forces; diplomatically, we are trying to find a political solution to the problem of Afghanistan so that the 1.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan go back, and the Soviet troops withdraw; economically, we are trying to boost our agricultural and industrial production; and, politically, we are trying to improve our relations with India.

Q : Now, what is the United States' attitude? Do you foresee any qualitative change in the near future ?

A : It is somewhat premature to say anything about it. We have had some good contacts with the new Administration, but high-level personal contacts have yet to take place, which, we hope, will be in the near future. Our expectations are for improved relationship with the new Administration, compared to what we had with the previous Administration.

Q : Looking back at the whole history, what makes you so hopeful, if I don't use the word 'optimistic'?

A : It is not due to the tradition that the Republicans have been more favourable to Pakistan; it is that I think, the present Administration is very much alive to the security problems of this region, and has realised the strategic position Pakistan occupies, and which can help America in safeguarding its own interests.

Q : You have evidence for this ?

A : Yes, I think, we have had plenty of evidence already.

Q : Now, there seems to be little practical response to your efforts to normalise relations with the other Super Power, the Soviet Union. How do you see the prospects in this regard ?

A : We are persevering in our efforts, but it will take a long time to improve our relations with the Soviet Union. I think, this is because of basic differences in ideology, and in concept of security in this region.

Q : Can you explain in more detail about your relations with India, and the steps you have taken ?

A : We are very hopeful. I think, given the chance and the opportunity, both India and Pakistan would try to improve their relations.

Q : Apart from Kashmir, do you see any other hitch in the normalisation of relationship ?

A : There are the historic susceptibilities, particularly in respect of hegemonic designs; but we grant India greater power and influence because it is a much bigger country. We are not in competition with India, but we expect to be treated on equal terms as a sovereign country.

Q : How do you see the solution of Kashmir problem developing in the light of the Simla Agreement ?

A : I think, we should continue striving for a peaceful solution, because it is a political problem. Military means have been tried, and the problem has not been solved. So, our efforts should continue towards finding a political solution in the near or distant future.

Q : What would be Pakistan's attitude for a movement amongst Kashmiris, on the other side, for self-determination?

A : It will be up to the people of Kashmir – Indian-held Kashmir. But I would add, we are not looking for any trouble for us by aiding them from outside.

Q : Now, what is the progress about resolving the Afghan problem? You have been making all the efforts, but it seems that the more reasonable you appear to have been, the more intransigent the other side has become.

A : To be quite frank, the present Afghan regime is not its own master; it is under the total control of the Soviet Union.

Q: You mean, the problem is not between Pakistan and Afghanistan, but between the people of Afghanistan and the power occupying it? Where do you come in?

A: We come in because we are the neighbours of Afghanistan. Anything that happens in Afghanistan has a direct bearing on us. From that point of view, we have to ensure that Afghanistan is a stable, peaceful state, and not disturbed by outside elements. We have taken a principled stand. Our stand is that, in this 20th century, a Super Power cannot walk into a country and claim that it has been invited to occupy that country. We are urging the Soviets to go back and to let the people of Afghanistan decide what form of government they want for themselves, and then let these 1.5 million Afghan refugees return to their hearth and home.

Q: Now, I am turning to a different question. Mr. David Annals, former Labour Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, saw you recently in Pakistan, and reported on return that he found you very sympathetic and very concerned about the plight of the stranded Biharis in Bangladesh. Now, what really is the hitch? Is there a question of finance, or a political decision, or something else ?

A: I asked Lord Annals what I always ask others who come to see me on this subject – "Do Bangladeshis consider themselves Muslims or not ? If they do, then why don't they treat these Biharis as Muslim brothers, rather than as outcastes ?" It is the height of cruelty, in my opinion, that a people who have been uprooted thrice cannot even settle now in a country

to which they came considering it as their homeland. Of course, Pakistan is the homeland of all Muslims, and Muslims from anywhere are welcome to come and settle here. But one has also got to see that those who come to settle have some means of livelihood, so that they are not destitutes. I told Lord Annals, our agreement with Bangladesh was for the repatriation of thirty-five thousand Biharis. We have already received three hundred thousand Biharis, and we have made sure that each one of them has a shelter and a job. We can accept more Biharis only if enough resources are made available to transport them from Bangladesh to Pakistan, to provide them roof over their head, and means of livelihood. We have land on which to settle them, but we have no money.

Q: So, if somehow money could be found, you are willing to accommodate ?

A: Yes, we are willing to accommodate them.

Q: Is it not possible for you to take up the matter with President Zia-ur-Rehman on the lines you mentioned just now ?

A: I have mentioned this to him on these lines. I have similarly told the Saudis that Saudi Arabia is such a vast country with only seven million people; surely they can take in one million Biharis and settle them on Saudi land.

Q: What was their reaction ?

A: Not very favourable. Pakistan is willing to receive any

Muslim with open arms, but it has its resource constraint.

Q: So, we can say that money is the real problem ?

A: Financial resources to move and settle these people.

Q: Can you put any figure on that ?

A: I do not know how many people want to come ? How much will it cost ?

Q: Now, one last question. I summed up my previous interview with you, and captioned it "Pakistan's Soldier Democrat". This was not meant to please, but I gave the title a great deal of thought, and this was my own objective assessment. How would you like me to title the present one ?

A: I leave it to you.

Q: I want your guidance.

A: The Soldier Democrat is still there, except that he has not yet introduced democracy to the extent he wants to ! It's entirely up to you.

Interviewer : Thank you very much.

President : I thank you.

DR. WILLI STEUL

Dr. Willi Steul of West Germany stayed in Afghanistan for a number of years and studied Pushto. Later he did his doctorate in "Pashtunwali" (The Code of Pushtuns). Simultaneously, he worked as a free-lance journalist.

On return to West Germany, he became the Bonn correspondent of the South West Radio.

He paid a visit to Pakistan in March 1981, while stationed in Bonn and interviewed President Zia-ul-Haq.

He has since been transferred to Athens as a correspondent of the South West Radio.

INTERVIEW TO DR. WILLI STEUL ARD RADIO FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

26-3-1981

Interviewer: Your Government, especially, yourself, Mr. President, have repeatedly condemned the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. You demand withdrawal of Soviet troops, and you have offered tri-lateral talks between Iran, Pakistan and Kabul's Communist Party. Now, the fighting in Afghanistan is increasing due to the end of the winter. Will there also be increasing diplomatic initiative from your side ?

President : Well, our effort is to view the situation in its true perspective, and to find a political solution to the problem. For Pakistan, being a small country adjoining Afghanistan, the military option is out of the question. The Soviet intervention has qualitatively changed the entire geo-political situation of this region as a whole, and of South-West Asia in particular. It has also created a global problem of violation of the international principles of sovereignty, security and integrity of small countries. In the meantime, we have two million Afghan refugees on our soil, and we are doing our best to look after them in the spirit of humanitarianism and Islamic brotherhood.

Q: The present Afghanistan regime does not have many loyal security forces of its own, and, what is much more important, it has no popular base whatsoever. Without Russian troops, it cannot survive, and the

political solution can only be a compromise, which is possible if the Russians withdraw. I do not, therefore, see the possibility of a compromise. How do you think a solution could be achieved. What compromise do you have in mind ?

A : Very simple; no compromise! We have offered four basic principles for the solution of the problem. First and foremost, withdrawal of Russian troops; second, return of refugees, with honour and dignity, to their hearth and home; third, right to people of Afghanistan to choose their own form of Government; and, finally, restoration of the status of Afghanistan as a Muslim and non-aligned country. We are trying to find a solution based on these four principles, on which there can be no compromise.

Q : But, Mr. President, if the Soviet troops are withdrawn, this would automatically mean a crash down of this Afghan Government. Is the Soviet Government prepared yet to pay this price ?

A : No, I don't think the Soviet Union will withdraw, or can afford to withdraw, at this present juncture, because, if they do, the present regime will fall like a house of cards. Therefore, whereas we don't foresee immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops, and we foresee the perpetuation of the Babrak Karmal regime, yet the effort to find a political solution must continue.

Q : Our Foreign Minister was here, who had quite satisfactory talks, I think, also, in our opinion, from your side. What do you expect from European foreign

policy to back up this approach towards the solution?

A : You see, our options are limited. In fact, the only option available is to solve the problem politically at the international level, because the military option would mean confrontation and a possible Third World War, which is inconceivable at this stage. I am very grateful to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, particularly to your Chancellor Schmidt, and Foreign Minister, Mr. Genscher – the two German leaders whom I personally know – for helping us in our effort to solve the problem of Afghanistan. At the same time, we must urge the European community to keep raising their voice. I feel that even the Soviet Union is very conscious of world opinion, and if we keep shouting and reminding the world of the injustice being done to Afghanistan, perhaps, it will bring us a little nearer to the solution of the problem.

Q : This shouting, Mr. President, would you wish also to be accompanied by, let us say, more diplomatic pressure and, maybe also economic measures from the European side against the Soviet Union ?

A : Yes; a combination of diplomatic and economic pressures, and political voices, I think, will have a greater effect than only shouting.

Q : President Reagan is considering, and announced publicly, to arm the Mujahideen. I guess it is rather a danger for Pakistan ?

A : Yes; you are absolutely right. An open announce-

ment of such a nature will have repercussions in Pakistan. Arming of Mujahideen means provocation to the Soviet Union, directly or indirectly. You cannot arm the Mujahideen from any source other than through Pakistan. Pakistan, at the present moment, cannot afford to act as a conduit for military assistance inside Afghanistan, because Pakistan itself is not strong and stable enough. In order to ensure the integrity and security of Pakistan, and also the durability of the assistance to the Mujahideen, it is imperative that Pakistan be strengthened first. Thereafter, it can be determined as to how military assistance can be provided to the freedom-fighters inside Afghanistan.

Q: The Soviet troops, Mr. President, on your border, and the Communist regime in Kabul, constitute a threat to Pakistan, an open threat to Pakistan's security. But there is another opinion among the politicians that this situation may be accepted in a sort of regional *detente*. Are you considering this position?

A: No. It is not the presence of Soviet troops which is threatening Pakistan. It is the manner in which Soviet troops have entered Afghanistan which has endangered the security of Pakistan – not only of Pakistan, but of the entire region. So, the issue is not so much the presence of eighty thousand troops on our borders; it is the qualitative change that has been brought about by the manner in which Soviet troops have entered and occupied Afghanistan.

Q: Pakistan needs material, such as tanks and aircraft. You are interested in German weaponry. Have you

already made specific demands for tanks or aircraft?

A : We know what our immediate requirements are. We have put in a general request whether the German Government can consider a military sales programme to Pakistan. We have not taken it up officially as yet, I must confess, because so far the policy of the German Government has been not to provide military assistance or military equipment to countries other than those in NATO or in similar alliance.

Q : At the moment, you are well aware that, in Germany, the Government and the public are considering the question of sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia. Would Pakistan, when this is agreed upon, send its specific demands?

A : Pakistan's demands of military equipment for its defensive needs have no bearing on the Germans agreeing to offer military equipment to Saudi Arabia. Although we have close relationship with Saudi Arabia as well as with the Federal Republic of Germany, the two relationships are different in their own way. However, if you imply that, since West Germany has accepted to supply arms to Saudi Arabia, it may also agree to supply arms to Pakistan, then it is a very happy sign, and we would certainly make use of the opportunity.

Q : It is now almost four years that you and your comrades-in-arms took over power in Pakistan. As you are aware, when the western public are asked to help your country, they say yours is a non-democratic regime. Are you prepared to hold free elections as

you have repeatedly promised?

A: Yes, definitely; this is my objective. I have said, without mincing my words, that, at the present moment, I am heading a regime which is un-representative, which is not democratic, and which is military. The circumstances were such that we, the military were forced to take over. Our aim is to transfer power peacefully to the people's representatives at an opportune moment, that is, when there are peaceful conditions inside the country. I believe that there is no alternative to holding elections, and transferring power to the chosen representatives of the people.

Q: Could you set a date for these elections?

A: I have a date in mind; but I am not intentionally giving it out, because if I do, and am unable to keep it, it will damage my credibility – as happened twice already – and it will also create uncertainty in the country. However, I have said so at the top of my voice that I am not here for good, but only for the duration in which it is possible for me to create peaceful conditions for holding elections, and ushering in democracy of the type best suited to Pakistan.

Q: A few days ago, a Provisional Constitutional Order was published, and it says that the PPP of the late Mr. Bhutto – the party that might win the elections, or have a big majority, would be excluded. Doesn't this, in fact, endanger your moves towards democracy?

A: No. This Order does not say that the PPP is excluded. You see, one of the ills of our political system has

been the irresponsibility that is generated by the parties not following the democratic norms of holding their own elections, or registering themselves in order to be accountable for their sources of funds. In 1979, when we planned to hold elections, the Provisional Constitutional Order was issued laying down certain conditions, including registration. The PPP did not register itself, nor did it hold party elections, and it was also not prepared to disclose the source of its funds. It thus forfeited the right to participate in elections. We even introduced a clause in the Order that those parties which are newly-formed, or which have not registered so far, could apply for registration, provided they could qualify according to the conditions of the Political Parties Act. We didn't exclude the PPP. It was the PPP itself that stayed out.

Q: Were you guided also by the fact that at least a part of the PPP seemed to be behind the hijacking?

President : Not just a part of it; this conspiracy was, in fact, hatched by the PPP hierarchy. But I am not using this as an excuse or political means to suppress the PPP; nothing of the sort. Nevertheless, it shows that there are individuals and parties who believe in the politics of violence; for whom nothing matters except their own political aims, irrespective of what happens to the country. Such unpatriotic, undemocratic elements, in my view, must never be allowed to flourish in Pakistan.

Interviewer : Thank you Mr. President.

INTERVIEW TO BRITISH MEDIA TEAM 27-3-1981

President : It gives me pleasure to meet members of the British Press, comprising Lord Carrington's delegation. I can see some of the familiar faces who were here last time. We hope you have enjoyed your stay. If there is anything I can do for you, I am at your service. Please feel free to ask anything you like.

Interviewer: Are you satisfied, Mr. President, with the level of western aid offered to help you face the burden of Afghan refugees in your country ?

A : Quite frankly, no; but what is encouraging is that people have started seeing the problem in its true perspective; and, in that respect, we are grateful to the West European countries and, in particular, to Mrs. Thatcher and Lord Carrington.

Q : Sir, what about the western aid for Pakistan by way of arms and economic development? I am thinking particularly about the American proposal....

A : We welcome economic aid. As regards military assistance, I think one has to look into it in greater depth, with all its implications. Whereas Pakistan definitely needs to be strengthened, it does not want to involve itself in any military relationship, as such. There are two aspects of the problem; one is to strengthen the base, which is Pakistan; and the other, to assist the freedom-fighters inside Afghanistan. The western world is looking at both these aspects, which

are complementary. You cannot take one aspect, and ignore the other. Meanwhile; Pakistan is basic to both; and, it is in that respect, that one has to look into all the ramifications of military assistance to Pakistan.

Q : Are you thinking, Sir, of military aid to those fighting in Afghanistan?

A : I see no reason why one should hesitate to help the freedom-fighters in any way one can. Pakistan cannot; but, I hope, others will. The reason why Pakistan cannot, unfortunately, is that it is not strong enough to help the freedom-fighters in Afghanistan militarily, and, in the bargain, bear the brunt of the wrath of a Super Power, whose retaliation would be immediate.

Q : But can't Pakistan allow her territory to be used as a conduit for arms?

A : No, not until the conduit itself is earthquake-proof, if I can use that term. The basic point is that if the sanctuary has to be utilised as a conduit, its durability and safety, to serve as the passage, has to be assured.

Q : But how do you think arms could be channelled to the freedom-fighters without, at least, the co-operation of your Government? I mean, western arms cannot actually be dropped to the freedom-fighters in any quantity without being channelled through your country?

A : I agree. It cannot be done without Pakistan being used as a conduit. But, before Pakistan is used as a

conduit, it has to be strengthened.

Q : Does not that affect the non-aligned status of Pakistan, if the West were to turn Pakistan into this much a stronger unit that you are suggesting?

A : No. Let me give an example. We have a neighbour with whom we have been making an all-out effort to develop very friendly relations; a neighbour with whom we have fought three wars. I am talking about India. Yet, look at India – one of the founding fathers of the Non-Aligned Movement – getting military aid of 1.7 billion dollars worth, at concessional rates, from the Soviet Union. Nobody has challenged the status of India as a non-aligned country. If Pakistan receives that much of military equipment, after purchasing it from whatever country it wishes, and as long as that quantum of equipment is for its defensive needs, I see no reason why its non-aligned status should be challenged?

Q : Could you give us an indication of broad outlay – how much aid, in terms of dollars, would be needed to create the sort of strong Pakistan that you have in mind?

A : No. It will not be possible for me to give it out publicly. Militarily, we are not that strong; and, if at all Pakistan is to be strengthened, a substantial amount of effort would be required. I must add that I am talking of assistance for strengthening only Pakistan's defence capability, and not for developing its offensive posture, so that certain sensitivities in this region do not get ignited.

Q: But you are saying, at the same time, Mr. President, that you do not see any solution to the problem unless the freedom-fighters of Afghanistan are able to bring up a military victory.

A: No, Sir. There are two aspects of the problem. What has happened in Afghanistan is well-known to all the freedom-loving countries of the world, more so to the British, because they have been very closely associated with this part of the region, including Afghanistan, in the last 150 years. So, there are two aspects of the problem; one is political; the other strategic, which means military. To get the Russians out of Afghanistan, there are only two ways: use of political pressure, and use of military force. The military force cannot be used by anybody else other than a country or a party that can match the Soviet might. So, what is left is the political option. At the same time, in my opinion, the political and the military aspects cannot be segregated. Both have got to work hand in hand. Now, we have a fiercely independent people who, from 27th December 1979 onwards, have been shedding their blood; who have been sacrificing their lives; who have been waging the battle of resistance without any major assistance from the outside world, including Pakistan; and, if they have been able to resist and fight so far, then, I think we should not only salute them for their valour, but also strengthen their hands. So, what I am trying to suggest is that it is the duty of the free world to see that the political pressure on the Soviets is generated to the extent that they start feeling its effect; and, at the same time, it is the responsibility of the free world to help those who are fighting for their country's freedom. Looking

after their refugees, as we are doing, is one way of helping the freedom-fighters, but those who can help them effectively in any other manner should consider it their duty to do so.

Q : Can you say something regarding the basis of your discussion with Americans now? Is it that Pakistan will allow herself to be used as a conduit for arms to the freedom-fighters in Afghanistan, when Pakistan has been strengthened sufficiently by the West ?

A : No, Sir. We are dealing with this problem on three fronts. First, we are in touch with the Soviets and have stressed upon them four basic pre-conditions – withdrawal of Soviet troops; restoration of the status of Afghanistan as a non-aligned, Muslim country; return with honour and dignity, of the two million refugees now on Pakistani soil; and, last, but not the least, right of the people of Afghanistan to choose the form of Government they want. Second, we are pursuing a political solution of the problem through the United Nations. Third, we are trying to impress upon the countries of the free world that, if the Soviet Union is to be made to realise the price it has to pay for what it has done in Afghanistan, then they have to assist the freedom-fighters. So, these are the three particular aspects; and you cannot separate one from the other.

Q : In your talks with the Americans, is this point being made now that Pakistan cannot be a conduit unless America and the West strengthen Pakistan sufficiently ?

A : With the United States of America, our dialogue covers many other aspects besides the Afghanistan issue. The basic thrust of our discussion is to identify areas of American interests in this region, and those of Pakistan, and also the interests common to both, to the extent that they serve the cause of Pakistan, as well as the United States of America. This would enable the two to determine how the relationship could be brought on a more credible and durable basis than before.

Q : Do you feel, Sir, that the West has been too slow until now to recognise what you are talking about – the importance of both arranging Pakistan's affairs and supporting the freedom-fighters?

A : It has taken us a year and six months to make the Western Powers realise what has happened in Afghanistan, and it was only after eighty thousand Soviet troops actually moved into Afghanistan that the West heeded what Pakistan had been shouting from the housetop from April 1978 onwards. So, a delay has occurred, there is no doubt; but better late than never.

Q : What kind of aid are you getting from the Chinese ?

A : With China, we have a special relationship. Chinese have helped us economically, Chinese have helped us militarily; Chinese have helped us technically; Chinese have helped us politically, morally, and in many other ways.

Q : What is special about this ?

A : In the sense that we have gone through many crises, and China has always stood by our side. Many of our friends have not! Pakistan is a much smaller country compared to China, but our relationship, I must say, is based on mutual understanding and our friendship has stood the test of time.

Q : Do you know whether Chinese are giving military aid, or any other aid, to the guerillas in Afghanistan?

A : No. They are not. It simply cannot happen. I can be very categorical on this score, because any assistance to the freedom-fighters can go either through Pakistan or Iran. From Iran, the terrain is such that transporting supplies would be difficult. Whatever is supplied to the freedom-fighters has, therefore, to go through Pakistan; and I know that we have not accepted a situation where China may give assistance to the freedom-fighters.

Q : If I understand the situation, at the moment, you think that the Russians are in Afghanistan for ever. There is nothing we can do really to get them out, except try and make them pay a bit for it.

A : Yes, and we have to try very hard.

Q : Yes. And the rebels really need arms? They can't get arms because Pakistan can't be a conduit for it?

A : Until Pakistan is strengthened.

Q : How long will it take for Pakistan to be strengthened? How long will the freedom-fighters have to carry on

with the weapons that they have got? It's a losing battle.

A : The freedom-fighters are literally fighting with bare hands, with sticks as it were; with late 18th, 19th century model of muzzle-loaders. If their spirit is kept alive, and if some assistance is given to them, they can carry on fighting valiantly, and, in the process, the Soviet Union can be made to realise that it has to pay a fairly heavy price.......

Q : What do you mean by price ?

A : Well, the British paid some price for retaining the territories in the South-East Asia; so did the French for retaining theirs. The United States of America paid some price in Vietnam.

Q : Should it be another Vietnam ?

A : Many wish it to be so.

Q : You hope to encourage Lord Carrington to support these views of yours ?

A : We have identity of views with the British Government. As I have said earlier, we are grateful for the help – in the political and moral field – that has been forthcoming from the British Government all along.

Q : In the final analysis, once the Russians have been made to pay, you or your successors will have to get round the table with the Russians and negotiate a settlement – just to agree that they are there to stay ?

A : Eventually, a political solution has to be found.

Q : Eventually, we are going to have to accept that they are there for ever ?

A : As I see it, I do not see them getting out in the near future.

Q : Now, wouldn't it be more practical to arm the guerillas with weapons like missiles to bring down Soviet gunships, instead of letting them get massacred with their 19th century muzzle-loading arms ?

A : As I said, I would love them to have weapons. But I have also to see that, in the bargain, we do not lose Pakistan as well. You see my point ?

Q : In what way you might lose Pakistan ?

A : When Pakistan undertakes to act as a conduit for arms supplies ~~and~~ supports the freedom-fighters openly, then it must also be prepared to pay the price of Russian retaliation. That retaliation will come in the form of a physical force, whether it is in the form of a hot pursuit, of an air attack. We have had a foretaste of it. We have already experienced attacks on our territory.

Q : Do you really believe Russians will send tanks across the border ?

A : Why not ? If the Soviets feel that Pakistan is in their way, between Kabul and Gwadar, or between Kabul and Wagah (you know our border with India is at

Wagah), and if they are also sure that, after singing praises of Pakistan's valour for three months, the world will forget all about it, then the Soviet Union would probably send the tanks across the border, as you put it. For the present, they have occasionally come into our territory and knocked down some of our posts; and we have suffered casualties. But once they know that we are serving as a conduit, and that nobody is standing by us, they will give us a little heavier dose of punishment. In the bargain, as I said, if Pakistan has to lose its freedom, and there is none to support it, then it has got to think twice as to the form and extent of help it should offer to the freedom-fighters in Afghanistan.

Q : I would like to turn to the matter of civil liberties in the country. Many people in the West are very concerned about the extent of Martial Law in this country. I would like to ask you in particular about the whereabouts of the Editor of *Viewpoint,* Mazhar Ali Khan. I would like to know under what conditions he is living?

A : I read his *Viewpoint* Weekly, and I have not seen any issue missing in the last, say, four weeks. I will be very frank. I have no idea where he is at present; but I will let you know.

Q : I believe he is under detention for several weeks.

A : I will check up. I am being quite serious when I say I do not know. His paper comes out from Lahore; he lives in Lahore. He is a thoroughbred communist, nobody has any doubt on that score. If he has been

arrested, he must have been arrested under the existing laws in Pakistan pertaining to association with some subversive or other elements operating against the integrity of Pakistan. Other than this, there is no reason for his arrest.

Q : And his wife ?

A : And his wife. They are both thoroughbred communits. If they have been arrested, it must have been in accordance with the law of the land. We do not put people behind bars for nothing.

Q : All the people who are behind bars, have they been in courts, or have they their right of *habeas corpus ?* Have they had lawyers ? Have there been trials ?

A : If anybody is put behind bars for anything, he can go to court, and challenge his detention.

Q : But that is what you don't do any more ?

A : We do.

Q : But not in the new constitutional amendment ?

A : No, Sir, no.

Q : There is no *habeas corpus* any more.

A : It is only the acts of Martial Law which are not challengeable in court; but it does not mean that you just pick up a man and put him behind bars. We consider ourselves somewhat civilised .

Q: But do you recognise, Mr. President, that the continuation of Martial Law can be a handicap in getting the sympathy of Western Powers to give you the aid which Pakistan needs in the current situation?

A: I am not concerned so much with the Western Powers' viewpoint on Martial Law, as I am with what I myself feel about it. I feel that it is not good for Pakistan to have a military regime a moment longer than is absolutely necessary. The moment we have a real opening for the political process to commence, I will be the first person to start it.

Q: Have you any idea of how long it might be before you could end the Martial Law?

A: One to two years.

Q: One to two years?

A: Yes, one to two years. It cannot be any earlier. I certainly do not have any intention of extending my stay, or that of the military regime, any longer than necessary. But, I think, it will take nothing less than a year or two at least to bring about normal conditions under which we could start the political process.

Q: The Chief Justice of Pakistan, Anwarul Haq, describing what happened on Wednesday morning when he went to see you, said that he could not, in conscience, take an oath of allegiance under the new constitutional amendment that you rather suddenly introduced. He said that you told him. "We have our compulsions". I wonder if you could explain what are

the compulsions that caused this sudden change?

A : You see, for three-and-a-half years, we tried to run the affairs of the country, with the judiciary proceeding unhampered at its own pace, and the result has been the hijacking, the subversion that has gone on and the amount of money that is flowing in from vested foreign interests in a bid to create disaffection and shake the roots of this country. So, we thought that time had come to run the Martial Law, for a change, like a Martial Law, and that when we turn over the country to civilian representatives, then they can run it on democratic lines.

Q : Would you describe yourself as a democrat?

A : No; I am a military man trying to run this country's affairs in as democratic a manner as possible in the circumstances. I would say that the people enjoy much greater liberty today than they did during the elected democratic Government that the country had prior to my taking over on 5th of July, 1977. I stand on record to be either proved right or disproved on this claim.

Q : General, you were talking about the compulsions; you spoke about hijacking and various things. If you would explain, why it was that you chose to move against the judiciary which you always in the past held up?

A : Yes, I have great respect for the judiciary. The judiciary is supreme in this country. What I have tried to do for the time being, in order to run this country,

is to let the military do its own job, and the judiciary do their job. What had been happening so far was that I was trying to do the job of the judiciary, and the judiciary was trying to do my job, which is not possible.

Q : They were carrying on the laws.

A : The judiciary interprets laws. It should not, in my opinion, take upon itself the responsibilities of administration. I need not mention to you the veiws which have recently been expressed by the Chief Justice of the United States of America. I don't know whether you have read them; they are worth reading. If you study the views of the Chief Justice of the United States of America about the judiciary and the administration of law and justice, and apply these to Pakistan, then you will see that there is some truth in my compulsions.

Q : There were a number of constitutional cases which were coming up, which I understand were set down for next month which the Judges in the normal process of law would have been able to decide on the legitimacy of your administration. You had a very limited validity under the 1977 Supreme Court judgement.

A : No; this was not the consideration at all, because in the 1977 Case, the judiciary thought it fit to give the Martial Law authority unlimited power under the Law of Necessity.

Q : Well, you'd have held the power so long as you had

held elections within six months.

A : No; no time-limit was given. For the interim period, till normalcy is restored, the country can be run under Martial Law – this is the judgement; there is no time-limit. The judgement says that elections should be held as soon as possible, and power transferred. We have been trying to do this. The interpretation of what is the time-scale should be left to the executive. What we have tried to acquire, for the present, are the powers to be able to administer the country more effectively. What we are asking with all the respect and regard we have for our judiciary, is to mind their own business, interpret the laws and dispense justice, and not to meddle in running the affairs of the country.

Q : One short question. There was some talk, Mr. President, of trying to get Pakistan back into the Commonwealth?

President : Not only thought; we have been talking about it; debating it, for the last over three years, with the members of the Commonwealth. However, as I said earlier on also, Pakistan desires to get back to the Commonwealth family, but the re-entry must be honourable. You see my point?

Interviewer : Thank you, Sir.

MAHMOUD MEHDI ABUDL HALIM

Mahmoud Mehdi, who is a graduate of the Cairo University is presently the head of the religious section of the leading Egyptian daily *'Al-Ahram'*, Cairo and occasionally reports for the paper. Simultaneously he is a member of the Press Syndicate, Authors' Federation, Religious Committee, Radio and T.V. Union and Muslim Youth Society, Cairo. He has also written two books on religion.

In 1981, he visited Pakistan with the Grand Sheikh of *Al-Azhar* and interviewed the President on 25 April 1981 in Islamabad. The interview was subsequently published in *Al-Ahram* 28 May 1981.

INTERVIEW TO
MAHMOUD MEHDI ABDUL HALIM
AL-AHRAM, CAIRO
25-4-1981

Interviewer: Your Excellency, you know that *Al-Ahram* is the largest Arab daily, which mirrors the developments taking place in the world and especially in the world of Islam. Your Excellency, Pakistan has taken certain steps towards progress and prosperity under your kind leadership, particularly in the field of Islamisation. Would you consent to throw some light on some important aspects of this development?

President: I have great regard for your paper. *Al-Ahram* has been, and will *Insha' Allah*, continue to be the leading newspaper of the Middle East and the Muslim World. Sheikh *Al-Azhar* was just telling me how much space your paper is devoting to the subject of *Deen-i-Islam.* And we have heard from our Embassy in Cairo that, sometimes, there is also a mention in your columns of the Islamisation process that is going on in Pakistan. So, permit me, Syed Mahmood, to thank you and, through you, your paper, for the kind comments about Pakistan. Now, as you know, Pakistan was carved out of this sub-continent to be an Islamic State. This is a unique example in the world of a Muslim country being created in the name of Islam. So, in keeping with the spirit of Islam and Islamic ideology of this country, we have made our humble efforts towards the introduction of Islamic laws in Pakistan, and the promotion of Islamic values in society. We have introduced basic elements of Islamic teachings in the field of education, in the courses of

study from the primary to the post-graduate level; we have taken the first step towards introducing interest-free economy; we have enforced *Nizam-e-Zakat,* and setup elected *Zakat* Committees in rural and urban areas through whom *Zakat* is distributed amongst the *Mustahikeen;* we have promulgated the Hudood Ordinance and also decreed that any existing law which is against the injunctions of Islam will be declared null and void; we have established a higher Court of *Shariah,* consisting of Judges as well as *Ulema;* and we are now in the process of establishing *Majlis-i-Shoora,* which will have representatives of the general public, as well as professional bodies nominated by me and my colleagues, from all over the country, and this would be an important step towards initiating democratic process. These are some of the measures we have taken so far to enable us to establish an Islamic order in the country in due course of time.

Q : *Insha' Allah.* Your Excellency, we sometimes hear that there are some elements in Pakistan who oppose your efforts towards the implementation of *Sharia.* Would you like to comment?

A : Yes; there were people who opposed the Prophet (may peace be upon him); who am I? I am a very humble servant of God and follower of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him). I feel it is my duty to continue my efforts. There will always be hurdles when one is trying to cast anchor of Islam. We have some people who don't like Islamic values, who call themselves Muslims, but who project themselves as the modern, secular types. I will continue my efforts

to convert them to the Islamic way of life.

Q : We hope *Allah* will give you success.

A : Thank you.

Q : Your Excellency, we have witnessed your immense personal interest in the visit of His Eminence, the Grand Imam, and also the deep interest taken by the people of Pakistan in his visit. What are your personal comments?

A : We are highly honoured to receive an eminent personality like Sheikh *Al-Azhar.* There are many Heads of State and there are many Muslim countries, but there is only one *Al-Azhar*, and there is only one Sheikh *Al-Azhar*. So from that point of view, you can see how much love and affection the people of Pakistan have for him.

Q : Your Excellency, yesterday you met, His Eminence the Grand Imam, and the meeting, I think, lasted about two hours. So, would you like to enlighten the readers of *Al-Ahram,* who are in millions, about the subjects which were discussed in the meeting?

A : Yes; it was my intention to take this opportunity of Sheikh Al-Azhar's presence to educate myself. I asked his opinion on the unity of the Islamic Ummah; I discussed with him the subject of *Nizam-i-Zakat;* I also sought, and was enlightened by his views on the system of Government in Muslim countries. I am indeed very grateful to him for the extremely useful discussion we had for over two hours, and from

which I benefited enormously.

Q : Your Excellency, the people of the Muslim World in general, and of Egypt in particular, fully appreciate the role you are playing in regard to the Afghanistan situation – a role that is based on your deep commitment and love for the unity of the Islamic Ummah. So, the readers of *Al-Ahram* in particular, and the Arab world in general, would like to know your ideas about this issue.

A : I would be very brief. Here is a country known as Afghanistan – an Islamic, non-aligned country – which was forcibly occupied by eighty thousand Soviet troops. So how could we, who are Muslims and also its neighbours, keep quiet? An emergency meeting of Foreign Ministers of Islamic countries was convened in Islamabad. It was followed by a regular meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Next, the issue was taken up in the United Nations. By the grace of God at all these conferences, we were able to enlighten the world and enlist its support to the extent that in the November meeting of the UN General Assembly, one hundred and eleven countries voted in favour of Pakistan's resolution. It is unfortunate that Pakistan does not have sufficient material resources to help our Afghan brothers who are fighting for their freedom. We are only looking after the Afghan refugees, *Muhajreen*, who are on Pakistani soil, and whose number is two million today. We will continue to look after them, on humanitarian grounds, and as Muslim brothers, as long as necessary. In this humble effort of Pakistan, we are being assisted by our

brothers in the Islamic World. We hope, one day, *Insha' Allah*, our principled stand, backed up internationally, will help create conditions in which these refugees can go back to their country with honour and dignity.

Q : Mr. President, the readers of *Al-Ahram* would very much like to know from Your Excellency the latest developments about the progress of the Peace Mission towards bringing about unity and ceasefire between two brotherly Muslim countries of Iraq and iran.

A : As you know, from the very beginning of the conflict, I have been associated with bringing about a peaceful solution. I have also participated in the Peace Mission which was set up by the Islamic Conference. There are difficulties; but I am sure that with the continuous efforts of the Peace Mission and the steadfast support of the Muslim countries, we will, *Insha' Allah*, sooner than later, be able to bring the two countries to the conference table.

Q : Your Excellency, Mr. President, you know that the Government and people of the brotherly country, Egypt, love you from the depth of their hearts. Do you like to give any message to the people and the Government of Egypt?

A : I have great love and regard for the people of Egypt. I have had the privilege of meeting members of the Egyptian Armed Forces, and I salute the Egyptian soldiery for their valour. Their brilliant victory over Israel in the 1973 war has filled the entire Muslim World with pride. It is our earnest prayer that may

the people of Egypt be blessed always with progress and we hope and pray that Muslim countries will shed all their differences, and that the Islamic *Ummah* will rise as *Umat-ul-Wahidah*.

Interviewer : *Insha' Allah.* Your Excellency, to conclude this interview of mine, please accept my heartfelt prayers to Allah Almighty to guide you and to grant you success – and, indeed, grant all Heads of Muslim States and Governments success in fulfilling their aspirations and realising their ideals for the benefit and prosperity of the *Ummah*.

President : Thank you.

INTERVIEW TO F.R. GERMANY CORRESPONDENTS
30-4-1981

President : I welcome – shall I say German Press, or Bavarian Press – journalists accompanying Dr. Strauss. I thought I'd have the privilege of your company while you were not so busy this evening, in case you wanted to know something more about Pakistan and its policies.

We are a country of 84 million people, the majority of whom are Muslims. We have a fair-sized minority of Christians and other non-Muslims, such as Hindus and Sikhs. I am mentioning this, in particular, because in the West, sometimes we are misunderstood as having militant minds that go back to the era of the Crusades when Christians and Muslims were at war. I hope you would have noticed yourselves that Muslims, Christians and other communities in Pakistan live in peace and harmony and the minorities enjoy complete freedom of worship. Islam is a complete code of conduct, and encompasses all aspects of human life – relationship between man and man ; between government and people; between one state and another.

It was this Islamic way of life that motivated the Muslims of the sub-continent to carve a separate homeland for themselves, called Pakistan, in 1947. We had hoped that Pakistan and India would, thereafter, live as good neighbours; but the two have fought three wars since. I don't need to go into their causes, or who started them first. However, the last

war resulted in East Pakistan – which is now Bangladesh – being dismembered from West Pakistan, and the world knows, which countries conspired to achieve this end. However, that's past history. We wish Bangladesh all the very best, and we wish India to reconcile herself to our existence as a sovereign state. We are not in competition with India. India is much bigger country than Pakistan. We want to have good neighbourly relations with the Indians. If West Germany and France, or England and France can be friends, after years of hostility, I see no reason why Pakistan and India cannot live together as friendly neighbours.

To our west is Afghanistan which is occupied by some one hundred thousand troops of a Super Power. While the traditionally independent Afghans are waging a guerilla war for their freedom, we are looking after the two million Afghan refugees who have sought shelter on our soil so far. We are seeking to find a political solution to the problem on the basis of withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, return of refugees to their hearth and home with honour and dignity, and right of the Afghan people to choose their own form of government. This roughly is the geo-political reality of Pakistan.

Inside the country, there is a military regime which, as you would have noticed, is far from a dictatorial type. For the first time in 15 years, we have held elections, on adult franchise basis, to local bodies. We have thus introduced democracy at the grass-root level, and we want to progress from here, in not too distant a future, towards democratic institu-

tions at the provincial and national level, and finally hand over power to the elected representatives of the people. This roughly is the scenario of Pakistan today; if now you want to ask any question, I will be too pleased to answer them.

Q : Mr. President, may be to start with, can you give your impressions about your visitor, about his appearance, and his personality?

A : I have had occasion to visit the Federal Republic of Germany, and to meet Chancellor Schmidt and Foreign Minister Genscher; and, over the years, since the times of Chancellor Adenaur, and also when Dr. Strauss was the Defence Minister, the two countries have enjoyed excellent relationship. We are, indeed very glad that Dr. Strauss accepted our invitation and found time to come here. Of course, he has his own standing in German politics, as leader of the opposition party of CSU, and as Chief Minister of Bavaria. We are, however, treating him as a distinguished representative of the whole of the Federal Republic of Germany. It has been a great experience, and an extremely pleasant one, for me to exchange views and ideas with Dr. Strauss, and also with members of his delegation. If we have a few more politicians like Dr. Strauss – forthright, firm, and imbued with the courage of conviction – I think, the world – the free world – would have a greater chance of maintaining its liberty and freedom against all odds. Mind you, I am not comparing Dr. Strauss with the other personalities in West Germany, for whom I also have great regard. For the present, I am only speaking of Dr. Strauss's qualities, as I have observed them.

Q : Mr. President, will the financial help promised by the US, and by the Western nations, greatly contribute to the improvement of the economic situation of Pakistan, and could you say a few words on the country's present economic situation?

A : In Pakistan, we have taken tremendous strides towards economic stability. We are not yet out of the wood; but, in comparison with say, three years ago, we are today on very firm economic grounds. The credit for this goes to our agriculturists, industrialists, businessmen, workers, and others whose combined effort has resulted in increased production and improved export performance. They all have cooperated with the policy-makers. The consortium aid from the World Bank, the IMF and several friendly countries has helped us in our effort to stand on our own feet. I must take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the assistance we have received from West Germany in the economic field not only materially, but also in terms of expert advice. We had the eminent economist, Dr. Schiller, to advise us. He has produced an excellent report. We may not agree with all his diagnosis and his prescription, but we have certainly benefited from his advice. Then, we have just had a very generous offer from Dr. Strauss for providing technical and vocational training to our agriculturists in Baluchistan. So, it is a combination of all these factors that has helped Pakistan towards overcoming its economic difficulties; and, though we are not out of the wood, we are certainly moving in the right direction.

Q : May I ask you? There was talk in the Press about the

forthcoming aid, at your request, from the United States, and there was also mention of what they call the Muslim bomb. Do you expect this?

A : In the first place, there is no such thing as the Muslim bomb.

Q : Not yet!

A : No. Never! We have no intention of experimenting with the manufacture of a nuclear bomb. We are developing a very modest programme of nuclear technology, in order to harness it for peaceful purposes.

As regards the aid from the United States of America, Pakistan is not entering into a military relationship with them. It is only a military sales programme, and, if we have, or can get, the money, we will buy equipment from the United States of America, or elsewhere – from France, or from any other country. Unfortunately, West Germany has not yet decided to sell arms to other countries. It is your policy. That's why I have not mentioned West Germany.

Q : May I just get to the point – the question of access for the US Navy to Pakistani harbours? Has there been any discussion on this with the United States ?

A : No; we have had no discussion about naval or military bases, nor does Pakistan intend to offer any such bases. We are a non-aligned country, and we don't propose to get into any bilateral or multilateral

defence arrangements. At the same time, I must stress that, being a non-aligned country does not mean that we are unmindful of the interests of the free world. Whether it is Saudi Arabia, or the Gulf States; whether it is the United States of America, or West Germany; we will always stand by the free world and for the freedom of mankind.

Q : Well, Mr. President, you spoke about bases; but there is also something called bases' facilities – access. Would you exclude it, as well ?

A : There are no bases' facilities for military purposes. We have some ships belonging to Western countries, and some to East European countries, which come, and pass by; they discharge their cargo and go away. We have had no naval ships calling on our harbours.

Q : On refugees. There have been rather conflicting reports in the Western Press. Some papers say that the refugees are actually better off than the people of Pakistan, because of the help of international agencies; and others say that the refugees are a burden on the Pakistan economy. Could you say something on that, please ?

A : Pakistan is spending approximately 1,980 million dollars annually on the two million Afghan refugees, which is half of the total expenditure involved. The other half is being borne by the world agencies. So, from that point of view, it is a strain on Pakistan's economy. But I would not call it a burden, since we have happily accepted to bear it ourselves. And this is because Afghanistan is not only our neighbour, it is

also a brotherly Muslim country, whose people have been oppressed and thrown out in such large numbers. As far as the comparison between the refugees and the people of Pakistan is concerned, I don't think it is right to say that they are better off. No human being can be happy living under canvass, in a tent, away from his hearth and home. I am sure if you see the refugee camps, you can easily find out whether the chaps are happy or unhappy staying there. To the best of my knowledge, the majority of Afghan refugees are eager to return to their homes as soon as they can manage with honour and dignity.

Q : Mr. President, is it not a problem, a growing social problem for you? I hear from your countrymen that many Afghans are not so poor, but rather rich, and they are buying houses and taking over trade. Is it not some kind of tension growing?

A : No; there is no social problem. There are Afghans who are rich, who have brought their trucks, tractors, and trolleys. Some have even hired houses in places like Peshawar, Islamabad, and in the interior. We have allowed them to ply their trucks without paying any taxes. We want them to earn their own living rather than be a burden on others. That is a considered Government policy. In certain quarters you'll find a criticism of this policy. There will always be some segments of community who will be critical. But the overall picture is not as grim, or as pessimistic, as has been portrayed by some.

Q : Do you believe that, at some stage, the Russians are going to attack Pakistan?

A: You know, when the military consider the options open to the enemy, they are trained to consider the enemy's capabilities and not just his intentions. At the moment, the Russians may not have the intention to walk into Pakistan, but they have the capability. There are one hundred thousand Russian troops, approximately ten mechanised or motorised divisions inside Afghanistan and in the north of Iran located in the region of Azerbaijan. Thus, today, if they wish to attack Pakistan, they have the capability to do so.

Pakistan has the capability of stopping small-scale incursions; but it is not in a position to oppose a large-scale attack by the Soviet Union, or by somebody else in collusion with the Soviet Union. However, Pakistan will be defended not only by men in uniform, but by its 80 million people – by every man, woman, and child. Our people will be ready to sacrifice their lives for the security of their country; and that is where our strength lies, and the Russians know it. So, I think, at the present moment, the Soviets will confine their operations to the subversion of Pakistani territory. They are doing their level best to subvert the loyalty of certain elements in the country, that is the people who are prone to such weaknesses.

Q: Have you any reasons to believe that guerilla activities for instance, will spill over the borders from Afghanistan into Baluchistan?

A: Not so far. The borders are well looked after not so much by the military, as by the Baluchis themselves.

Q : A long border ?

A : Yes; a long border – 1,200 kilometres. But we have no fears of guerilla activity from Afghanistan side, or of subversion by the Russian forces or Afghans through them. The only way the Russians can succeed is by subverting the loyalty of Pakistanis against Pakistan.

Q : By tradition and historical experience, a part of your army was always concentrated on your eastern borders with India. Have you regrouped your army in the north ?

A : We have more forces on the western front than we have ever had in the past; but the bulk of our forces are still stationed along the eastern borders, and we cannot change this situation. The reason is obvious. On the western borders we have no infrastructure – there are no roads; no communications; no drinking water; no electricity; no accommodation facilities. So, you can put only that many troops in the west as we have already. On the eastern side, we have a fully developed infrastructure. In a way, the lack of infrastructure on the western borders is an advantage: if it is difficult for us to place forces, it is equally difficult for the Russians to walk in, except by using the common approaches and accesses in this mountainous terrain.

Q : Living in India, one has an impression, and also reading the Pakistani Press I must say, that there have been war clouds during the last months.

A : No; I see clear skies! There are no war clouds. We certainly are not creating any. But our next-door neighbours are trying to give the impression that war is imminent. I am doing my level best to convince them that we believe in peace, and do not desire any confrontation with them.

Q : Mr. President, when you were touching upon the subject of weapons, you also mentioned West Germany. Indians are also getting some submarines, you know?

A : Yes, they have got two from West Germany.

Q : Did you, or your Foreign Minister, speak to Dr. Strauss about it?

President : No; we do not want to embarrass our West German friends. If they change their policies regarding supply of weapons, then we will be the first to approach them.

Well, it has been a great pleasure having you here. I hope you enjoy your stay in Pakistan. I wish you all the best, and trust you will come again.

Interviewer : Thank you.

BARRY CAME

Barry Came, who is the Hongkong based Asian Editor of the US news magazine 'News Week', visited Pakistan in May 1981. He interviewed the President on 14 May 1981. The interview was carried by the magazine in its 15 June 1981 issue.

INTERVIEW TO BARRY CAME NEWSWEEK CORRESPONDENT 14-5-1981

Interviewer : Mr. President, it appears that Pakistan and the United States are on the eve of resurrecting some kind of an economic and security relationship. In your opinion, why is it taking place at this particular time?

President : Let me first explain the background to you. Pakistan and the United States of America have had a long relationship from the past, and as in any relationship between individuals or nations, there have been periods of ups and downs in it. It's a kind of graph, based on occasional misunderstandings, some misconceptions, or expectations not being met – rightly or wrongly. So, it is not a question of resurrecting the association that Pakistan has had in the past with the United States, but of re-examining it in the light of the contemporary situation. The nature and scope of this relationship will be based on equality of sovereignty and mutuality of interests. We feel that Pakistan is occupying a very important strategic position today; and since Pakistan stands for the free world, of which the United States of America is the champion, there is good reason for the two to explore the common ground between them. What Pakistan values more than material benefit in such a relationship is its moral aspect, that is, it should be based on moral standards of mutual trust and confidence, and it should be both credible and durable. Now, it is in this context that we are in negotiations with the United States of America. I feel, it will be premature

to talk of acceptance or rejection of any offers at the moment.

Q : I think, in more of a geo-political sense – I won't use the word resurrection – the emerging new relationship has much to do with what is going on on your northern borders since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Won't you agree ?

A : Yes, in a way you are right. If I can put it in another phrase, we are trying to re-establish a relationship based on mutual understanding and on respect for each other's sovereignty. In this sense, what has happened on Pakistan's Western borders is significant. Pakistan also realises its position. It has to develop good relations with its neighbours. At the same time, Pakistan will not allow them to take it for granted, irrespective of their size. Pakistan, as I said, values its moral standards. We will not compromise on principles. We cannot rubber-stamp actions which violate international law. We cannot, in the 20th century, accept that might is still right. So, in that context, I believe, the interests of Pakistan and of the United States coincide. It is a bonus, in my opinion, to the process of re-establishing the relationship between Pakistan and the United States of America.

Q : Let us assume that everything goes through in the best of all possible worlds, what would Pakistan like America, first, in economic terms and, secondly, militarily ?

A : As far as I am concerned, Pakistan would very much prefer just an economic relationship. However, what

we are hoping is to acquire from the United States of America some military hardware – not on the basis of a military aid relationship, but through a sale-and-purchase agreement. Due to our past association with the United States of America, a large component of our military hardware is of U.S. origin. We want to replace that and, also, we want to acquire some other military equipment for the security and defence of Pakistan.

Q : Without actually going into the details on the kind of military equipment, could you pinpoint areas where the U.S. can fulfil a role for Pakistan in terms of equipment? You see, there are three or four general areas.

A : I will not describe the areas, but I will point to their scope. As I said, a large component of our military hardware is of U.S. origin; and, since we are entering into a sale-and-purchase relationship, what we are able to get from the United States is dependent on two things; first, how large is Pakistan's purse; and, secondly, which category of equipment the United States is willing to sell to Pakistan.

Q : On the question of terms, the Indians got a very, very good deal from the Soviet Union. Do you expect those kind of terms from the United States?

A : No; because such deals are not built in the American system, where the equipment is produced by the manufacturers. The United States Government can approve the sales, but it cannot determine or manipulate the prices, which is the prerogative of the

manufacturers. So, the facility for the arms procurement programme available to India from the Soviet Union, where 1.6 billion dollars worth of book value, is roughly equivalent to six to eight billion dollars in the world market, is not available to Pakistan.

Q : India's reaction to this emerging arrangement with the United States has been rather violent. Can you explain why?

A : It is otherwise inexplicable; but let me attempt it this way. I am sure you are a very knowledgeable person, and you know the size of India and that of Pakistan. Now, let us see who are India's neighbours. They are China, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Besides its size and population of over 600 million, and its vast resources, India today, has an Army that is rated the fifth largest in the world, a Navy the fourth largest, and an equally large Air Force. The size of its land forces is roughly three to four times that of Pakistan. Now, let us see against whom is all the India military might? It cannot be against Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, or Burma, since they are small countries. Is it against China? The Indian argument is that they are building up their military strength against China. Now, let us see the weaponry the Indians have acquired. They have acquired two hundred Jaguar deep-penetration aircraft, which cannot enter China's land-mass from any point in India. They have acquired T-72 tanks and T-62 tanks from the Russians, and bought some through some European sources, and they also have a great indigenous capability of producing at least two hundred tanks a year. These tanks cannot be utilised

against China, because of the mountainous terrain – the Himalayas, where tanks and machanised columns cannot operate. They cannot operate against Bangladesh, or Bhutan, or Nepal, or Burma. Now, let us look at the location of the Indian military strength. Over 75 per cent of the Indian military strength is located opposite Pakistan, in the very close proximity of India-Pakistan borders. What, then, is India afraid of ? Is it Pakistan? Before '71, if you would recall, the situation was different. Pakistan was double its present size, half located in the west, and half in the east. In 1971, by the courtesy of India and the Soviet Union, Pakistan was dismembered. Today, Pakistan is half of its original size. It has a few aircraft, a few guns for its defence. How can it jeopardise the safety and security of India, which is so large in size and has such a big arsenal ? The only legitimate explanation, which comes to my mind, for India's violent reaction, as you have put it, is that it wants to make sure that Pakistan continues to remain a weak state and thus accepts Indian hegemony, which it has refused to accept so far. I have said so often that we are not in competition with India, nor in an armament race with it; we are a small country, which is concerned with its own safety and security, and that is about all. We have not even once asked the Indian authorities as to why they are arming themselves so much. It is up to the Indians to decide what their defence requirements are. Similarly, we expect that India would allow Pakistan the right to determine what its security needs are. Pakistan cannot possibly be a source of threat to such a large country as India. So, the Indians' cries of wolf have no rational basis, except that they want to ensure that Pakistan remains

a weak and insecure state so that it accepts the Indian hegemony, or falls an easy prey to the Soviet Union, which is now hovering over Pakistan's western borders.

Q : Then, is it safe to assume that this US relationship with Pakistan is not likely to lead to improvement in Indo-Pak relations?

A : This is evident from the way India wants to exercise a veto on the decision of the United States of America to give some military assistance to Pakistan through arms sale-procurement relationship. But let me add here that, in spite of all this, Pakistan will go out of its way to try to improve and normalise its relations with India; not because we want to appease India, but because we genuinely believe that a good neighbourly, peaceful relationship is far better for the security of both Pakistan and India, and of the region as a whole.

Q : Leaving India aside for a moment, assuming this procurement relationship goes through, then you seem to have got a very good deal with the United States, even if you are not going to get the same kind of terms that India got from the Soviet Union. On the other hand, what do the Americans get in return for supplying you with military and economic assistance?

A : I am sorry; but your question is, again, in terms of purely material values. Now, we look at it in a different context – not merely in the context of what they give and what they get in return. We look at it also in terms of human relationship, from moral

advantage point of view. A strong and stable Pakistan in this region, in my opinion, adds to the security of the free world. I must also add here that, irrespective of whether Pakistan gets something from America or not, our conviction is that the 80 million people of Pakistan will not just be blown away; that they will stand in the path of any threat to their ideology, their security and their freedom. However, if Pakistan is able to strengthen its security through military sales assistance from the United States of America, it will welcome such prospects; and if it can thus ensure a stable, sound and secure region, this will also be in the overall interest of the free world, of which as I said, America is the champion.

Q : In more mundane western terms, there are no bases, port facilities, overflying, anything like that?

A : No; nothing like that! There has been neither any understanding nor any dialogue on the subject of bases or offer of facilities, or of any other such presence. The question has never figured so far in our talks.

Q : Then it seems that the United States has not even requested......

A : No. I would be quite frank; there has been no such request, nor any such offer. And, in any case, the United States of America is fully aware that, whereas Pakistan has no hesitation in extending its hand of friendship to the United States of America; whereas there is a lot of identity of perceptions, ideas, and interests between the two, Pakistan has with great

effort, acquired a non-aligned status, which it cherishes and is not prepared to compromise. Since we are new in this club of non-aligned members, we may be giving the impression of being holier-than-thou! If India has no qualms about buying equipment worth billions of dollars from the Soviet Union, and is hesitant in censuring the Soviets over their occupation of Afghanistan, and still boasts of being the founding father of Non-Aligned Movement, then why should Pakistan feel that its non-aligned status would be affected by acquiring military equipment through purchase from the United States of America? Well, it is not being holier-than-thou; it is a matter of principle on which Pakistan cannot compromise. Just as we will never accept to be a satellite of any power in the region, similarly, we will not like to be a satellite of the United States. But we would love to be remembered as friends of the United States of America.

Q : Some technological miracle! There have been misgivings among some elements in the United States about resuming military relationship with Pakistan, particularly because of what is viewed as an on-going nuclear weapons development programme. Are you building a nuclear bomb?

A : The answer is very short and sweet 'No'! We are not manufacturing a bomb. We are, however, engaged in a modest nuclear programme, which is wholly for peaceful purposes. Unfortunately, in all our thinking and relationship, whether it is with the United States of America, or the Soviet Union, India must figure: and so it must also in the nuclear context. If the

United States of America has no reservations in offering sophisticated modern military equipment to India, which has already exploded a bomb, and which refuses to accept international safeguards, then I see no reason, irrespective of the status of its nuclear programme, why Pakistan should be discriminated against? You see my point? But, to revert to your question, the answer, as I said in the beginning, is "No; we are not manufacturing an Islamic bomb" This is the vile propaganda of countries with vested interests.

Q: Without pressing this point too much; just one additional question on that nuclear thing. You don't appear to have any use for centrifuge enriched uranium?

A: We are working on enriching uranium. We have said so before, and will say it again. Ours is a modest programme for acquiring nuclear technology for peaceful purposes; and we consider that every nation has a right to acquire it. If we cannot get breeder-reactors from elsewhere, then we have no choice but to acquire this technology ourselves.

Q: The other area of misgivings in the United States, among some elements of the US Congress particularly, about a relationship between Washington and Islamabad, is the internal political situation here. There is an opinion among some of your critics that there has been no discernible progress towards ending Martial Law, towards popular elections. Would you tell us what your programme is internally, and how would you respond to this concern?

A : It is a very genuine concern. I must concede this, because, to a western mind, anything other than a western type of democracy is not acceptable. We ourselves feel that for Pakistan, which is a developing country, a prolonged Martial Law is not right. To give you the background, which I am sure you must be knowing; it was not by choice, or a wilful act, that the military intervened, it was a compelling necessity to save the country from a civil war. Having done so, it has been my effort for the last four years to develop democratic institutions. For the first time, after a gap of 15 years, which included five years of the so-called democratic government, it is this military regime that has held elections, on adult franchise basis, to the local bodies, which constitute the grass-root level of democracy. We have thus, initiated a step-by-step programme to introduce democracy. I have instituted a committee, and am myself working on it, to determine how best, in line with the Islamic practices and traditions, we can transfer power from the military to the people's representatives. In the meantime, it is our effort to increase the participation of the people in the affairs of the state. As I have said, we have introduced local democracy, the civic institutions; we now have provincial councils, and are currently in the process of selecting, from all over the country, suitable personalities for the Federal Council, which will serve as an advisory body, and help the Government in running the day-to-day administration. This institu- is designed to enable greater people's participation at the national level.

Q : Do you have a time table at all?

A : Yes, we have a time table, which I am intentionally not making public, and I hope you will not insist on asking me to disclose it. But it is a programme that is not spread over many years. As soon as we have been through the process of step-by-step introduction of democracy, in accordance with Islamic principles, and as soon as we can find ways and means of a peaceful transfer of power from the military to the people's representatives, we would have achieved our objective. I must also add here that we are just about to complete four years in office. I am not offering this as an excuse, please; but it is evident that we would not have lasted a day longer if we did not have the support of the people. The people of Pakistan, in my opinion, have supported the Government's policies on economic measures, on Islamisation of laws, introduction of Islamic values in society. They have also endorsed our foreign policy. If we continue to enjoy their support, then, I think the present regime would be successful, in not too distant a future, in achieving its aim of a peaceful transfer of power from the military to the people's representatives.

Q : Why was it necessary to introduce the Provisional Constitutional Order? Your critics claim that you have abrogated the 1973 Constitution.

A . No, that is not correct. We have not abrogated the 1973 Constitution. We have allowed the higher judiciary to function, and the law of the land to be supreme in spite of the fact that this is a military regime. What we have done is to set aside temporarily some clauses of the Constitution, and we have introduced a few Islamic laws to deal with certain criminal

offences, like theft, robbery, ilicit relationship, drinking alcohol, etc., and we have removed the element of judicial dichotomy in certain categories of cases being tried under Martial Law regulations. The lower courts, the High Courts and the Supreme Court are functioning in the normal manner, except that decisions of military courts, in respect of cases – which are a few – tried under Martial Law Orders cannot be challenged in any of the civil courts, including the superior courts.

Q : Your critics also claim to see a parallel between what is happening in Pakistan and Iran.

A : No; there is no such parallel. There is a fundamental difference between the two. In Iran, a revolution has taken place, and they are trying to establish their authority through a revolution. In Pakistan, we are proceeding through evolution. There is no common factor, except that both are seeking to serve the cause of Islam. We are doing so through an evolutionary process, and they through a revolutionary one – and there lies all the difference between the two.

Q : What about the reaction of the Soviet Union? The Soviet Ambassador, who was recently in Karachi, I read in your Press, has been promising everything, from nuclear reactors to anything Pakistanis want. Has there been an official exchange of views?

A : No; we have received no such offers, nor even that of nuclear technology. If we receive such an offer, it can be considered on merits. But one thing is very clear; while our effort is to improve our relationship with

the Soviet Union, we can never approve of Soviet expansionism.

Q : At what stage are the negotiations now with the United States?

A : Our Foreign Minister had a preliminary discussion last month, as you would surely know. This will be followed by an exchange of delegations between America and Pakistan. But our emphasis is on determining the basic principles first before proceeding to talk of aid. For this reason, as you might be knowing, we had volunteered to forego any assistance that might have been forthcoming in the current fiscal year. We have accepted the delay; and once the policies and principles are finalised, then it is just a question of modalities.

Q : One final question, Mr. President. Assuming that the "worst happens" and the negotiations fail, can you tell me what the impact would be on Pakistan, on the region, and the US interests in this region?

A : Repeating your words, if the worst happens, I assure you Pakistan will survive. As to what happens to the American interests, I think it is up to the United States of America to say. However, it will continue to be Pakistan's effort to have friendly relations with the United States of America, because of our past association based on great understanding and co-operation.

Q : You don't see any ominous implications for regional balance ?

A : I do. Here, I will repeat my answer to a similar question from Mr. Cronkite. I told Mr. Cronkite that if Pakistan goes, there will not be a single country, from Turkey to Vietnam, that will not be toppled over; such is the geo-political and strategic importance of Pakistan today. I also see the point that Pakistan has a lot to gain and a lot to lose from its relationship with the United States of America. When we call ourselves members of the free world and when we regard the United States of America as its champion, then we are also conscious of the obligations that Pakistan will be required to fulfil. What I am trying to convey is that Pakistan is a country that ought to be helped and strengthened rather than a country from which the maximum price should be extracted at the present moment.

Q : I don't understand that last point.

A : Pakistan should not be used as a source from which the United States of America should be trying to extract a price, a *quid pro quo,* something in return, for help offered. It should be the effort of the United States of America to strengthen Pakistan's purse, so that it can stand on its own feet. It is now a front-line state, and it is committed to checking any expansionism in this region. So, from that point of view, it is in the interest of Pakistan, in the interest of this region, in the interest of the free world, that Pakistan is strong and stable; and the United States of America should feel privileged to help this country of the free world in its endeavours to stand up to the onslaught from across its north-western borders.

Interviewer : An ancilliary question to that. Assuming that beyond the front-line are those rebels in the hills, is there any thought of Pakistan's serving as a conduit for arms to those, or are the rebels arming themselves ?

President : I would, frist, request you to call them freedom-fighters, and not "rebels". Next, a conduit must be strong enough to absorb the shocks of energy generated through it. Pakistan must be strong and stable before it can act as a conduit. If Pakistan is strengthened, it is indirectly strengthening the freedom-fighters themselves. Whether they get an extra pistol or a rifle, their strength will depend on how strong and stable their sanctuary is. At the moment, Pakistan is only serving as a sanctuary for two million of Afghan refugees who have come from across the border. We are providing them food and shelter on humanitarian grounds. We are not helping them militarily, because if we do so at this juncture, when we are not strong enough, the knock Pakistan will receive will not only harm the freedom-fighters, but will totally eliminate any future chances of success of the resistance movement.

BERNARD FALK

Bernard Falk a British national, has been working with the British Broadcasting Corporation for about 15 years. Prior to joining the B.B.C., he worked for the daily Mirror.

He interviewed the President of Pakistan on 28 May 1981.

He also interviewed previously many VIPs including King Hussain of Jordan and President Gaddafi of Libya.

INTERVIEW TO BERNARD FALK BBC, T.V. 28-5-1981

Interviewer : Mr. President, what do you see is the solution to the problem of Afghanistan? If the Russians remain in the country, what would be the long-term consequences?

President : Mr. Falk, to be quite frank with you, I really do not see that the solution is round the corner, or that it can be reached through military means. There has to be a political solution to the Afghanistan problem. The saving grace, in my opinion, is the realisation in the Soviet hierarchy that they cannot allow the problem to continue in its present form, in view of the hostile world reaction. The Soviet leadership is very much alive to the adverse views expressed forcefully in the free world, the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Conference, and other important forums. One hopes, therefore, that, one day, a political solution to the problem will be found.

Q : There is no indication of the Soviets thinking of pulling out. If they don't, what would be the long-term consequences? In your country, you have got over two million Afghan refugees sitting on your territory right now. What do you think could happen?

A : If the Russians do not pull out, then Pakistan will find itself in the role of a front-line state for a long

time to come. As to the two million Afghan refugees, the rate at which more and more are coming from across the border, is fraught with a lot of apprehensions for the future.

Q : Can I ask you about that? How do you see your position at a front-line state in relationship to the Russian invasion in Afghanistan? You know Russian troops are on your borders........

A : Yes; not only are there more than eighty thousand Russian troops in Afghanistan, we have them right on our borders. Our position has been a principled one. We have been advocating four basic conditions for the solution of the Afghanistan problem: one, the Soviet Union must withdraw its troops; two Afghanistan must revert to its status of a non-aligned Islamic country; three, all Afghan refugees must return to their homes with honour and dignity; and four, the people of Afghanistan must be given the right to choose the type of Government they want for themselves. We have stood by these principles.

Q : Do you believe that the presence of Russian troops so close to your country threatens the security of Pakistan.

A : Well, in a way it does, though the Soviets tell us that we should not worry, as they have no aggressive designs against Pakistan. We would very much like to believe them, particularly since we are not in a position to stand up against them militarily. However, Pakistan has made it quite clear, at the same time, that it won't be an easy walk-over for the

Russians; that it would have to be over the dead bodies of 84 million people of Pakistan; that Pakistan will defend its freedom, its integrity, and its ideology at all costs.

Q : Presumably, this is why you are seeking to upgrade your equipment in the army by negotiating a deal with the Americans?

A : We have large enough armed forces to look after the security of the country, externally and internally. However, like all armies of the world, occasionally our military hardware has got to be replaced. We have today, somewhat obsolescent equipment, and our options are limited since the equipment is of either Chinese origin, or American, or French. We have practically no equipment left of British origin. So, we have approached the United States of America to help us replace some of the obsolescent equipment, but we are not entering into a military aid relationship. What we are trying to acquire is a facility to purchase military equipment from the United States sources.

Q : How do you think the West, and particularly the United States of America, should regard Pakistan? What sort of relationship you think that you should have ?

A : I have always said one thing to our friends in the United States of America, and that is that relationship between our two countries ought to be based on mutual interests. If a relationship is based on mutuality of interests, then, irrespective of the size or

the nature of a country, the talks have got to be on equal terms.

Q : Do you think, America needs you right now with her relationship with Iran totally destroyed, and with the Russians in Afghanistan ?

A : I am positive that with its geo-political and strategic position, Pakistan can be of great significance to the free world and, particularly, to the United States of America, at this juncture.

Q : Can we look upon you as a friend ?

A : Certainly. We have had a long association with the United States of America, and a unique relationship with Great Britain before and after independence. Pakistan is fully committed to a policy of non-alignment now; but, prior to this, it was a member of certain military blocs sponsored by the United States, Great Britain, and some other Western countries.

Q : I would like to come on to India, Sir, your relationship with India, rather. Pakistan has traditionally feared India, and you have fought India on certain occasions since independence. Now you seem threatened from the west. Does this mean you would no longer fear a threat from the east?

A : Purely from military point of view – and I am a soldier – there is a threat from the east, as well as from the west. We have fought three wars with India; whereas we have had no problem with the west,

except now when there is a qualitative change because of Russian intervention.

Now, as regards India, our first effort is to make the Indians realise that they must accept the existence of Pakistan; that they must reconcile themselves to Pakistan being a reality. Our second effort is to convince India that Pakistan is not in competition with her; that India is an enormously bigger country and a next-door neighbour; and that it is in the interest of both to have good relations. In spite of the current outburst of the Indian Government against Pakistan acquiring arms from the United States, I have gone out of my way to extend a hand of friendship to India; and, I think, there may be a positive response. In fact, we are looking forward to a very productive dialogue with the Indian Foreign Minister, who is expected to arrive in Pakistan on the 8th of next month.

Q : When you hear that Mrs. Gandhi is receiving enormous sums in aid, particularly in military aid, from Soviet Russia, what do you feel then?

A : We have good reasons to be apprehensive, but I have always maintained that through a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union and certain bilateral security arrangements, India has managed to purchase military equipment worth six to eight billion dollars for only 1.6 billion in book value. It is none of Pakistan's business to object; it is for the Indians to determine what they require for their security. Similarly, I expect that India will not raise a chorus of objections at Pakistan acquiring military equipment; nor is it for

the Indians to sit in judgement on Pakistan's security needs.

Q : It is being suggested that the continued unrest among the Muslim community in India, which has resulted in a considerable number of deaths, may perhaps prompt Mrs.Gandhi to turn to her old policy – aggression against Pakistan – thus war is inevitable, tragically so; do you share that view ?

A : No. We feel war can be avoided, and must be avoided at all costs. This is in the interest not only of India and Pakistan, but of the world at large.

Q : You are still an Army Officer. In fact, you are a Head of State. Looking at your military background, what qualifications should an Army Officer have to run a country in your view ?

A : None! An Army Officer should not, by right, lay claim to any qualification, or disqualification, to run a country. I am against the military take-over of the administrative control of a country. Unfortunately, what happened in 1977.was that Pakistan was on the brink of civil war, and there were only two options for me as Chief of the Army Staff: either to say, "to hell with it", and let the country go to the dogs: or to rectify the situation. Much against my own wishes, and not by choice but through sheer compulsion, I decided to intervene and, I think, I have not done anything wrong. In fact, it was a patriotic act. Given the same conditions, I would act in exactly the same way.

Q : Do you like exercising some of the powers?

A : I tell you I don't enjoy exercising power. I enjoy sharing power, and this is exactly what I am doing. I have tried to take my colleagues into confidence. I have tried, directly and indirectly, to take my countrymen into confidence; and if, today, this regime has lasted for nearly four years, it has nothing to do with my ability, or the armed forces. If we have been able to save the country, make some headway, build the economy, and take, side by side with the free nations of the world, a principled stand against what has happened in Afghanistan, it is only because of the support that I have from the people of Pakistan, and also from the world community at large.

Q : If you believe that, Mr. President, then why not have the confidence to put it to the vote? Why not say to Pakistani people, "O.K. We will have an election".

A : According to my way of thinking, election is not an end by itself; it is a means to an end. Therefore, I must be sure of what would be achieved by the election. You see, in the 33 years' history of Pakistan, we have had one election, while we should have had ten elections.

Q : You believe in it ?

A : Yes, I believe in it, Mr. Falk. You will see that I will hold an election in accordance with the system that I believe is suited to the genius of the people of Pakistan.

Q : When will that situation come about? What will have to be the environment here before you agree to hold an election ?

A : In not too distant a future. I think it is a matter of a couple of years when we should be able to put the country through a democratic process, to a stage where people will elect their representatives in accordance with the principles of Islam.

Q : When you came to power you said, I will hold the election in 90 days. That didn't happen. You have, on two other occasions, promised to hold election, and you haven't. So, why are the conditions wrong now ?

A : I have postponed election on two occasions and, on both the occasions, I was urged by our political leaders to do so, because they were seeing negative results.

Q.: They might have lost, you mean ?

A : I don't know whether they would have won or lost. But as I said, an election is a means to an end. You see, we are a developing country, and our political system is not yet mature enough. We are not even as fortunate as India, where they now have the fourth generation of politicians; we have not had even the second. This is the unfortunate part. A mature political system just cannot come by itself; it has to be evolved; its foundation has to be laid at the grass-root level, on which to build a democratic structure. This is what exactly we are doing.

Q : It has been said that there will never be an election here while you are still in control ?

A : No, that is wrong. It is my earnest desire to introduce a system by which I can handover power peacefully to an elected leader. There should be a peaceful transition of power from the military to the elected representatives of the people. I have nothing against one-man one-vote; but, in order to establish Islamic values and traditions in the country, I am of the opinion that not every Tom, Dick and Harry, who has some money or position, should stand up to represent the people. Anyone who wants to be a representative of the people must have certain basic qualifications.

Q : What are they ?

A : His character must be unimpeachable; his personal and public record must been clean; he must be educated: and he must believe in the ideology of Pakistan, which is Islam. For the non-Muslims, patriotism is a fundamental qualification. This is all, there is nothing strange about this.

Q : We would like to know as a non-Muslim, what is it in the Islamic faith which you believe is necessary as a guiding force for the country ?

A : Belief in one God: belief in God's creation; and belief in service to mankind. This is common to Islam and to all faiths. As a Muslim, all I expect of a non-Muslim and a Pakistani, is love for the country, which is as much his right as it is mine. I consider him as first-rate a citizen as I consider a Muslim. I also grant

him more concessions than to a Muslim, because a Muslim is expected to pay *Zakat* – a sort of social welfare tax – which we do not ask a non-Muslim to pay.

Q: If you try to explain to me what there is about the lesson to be learnt from the Muslim faith, what would that be when you say you must lead your life according to Islam.

A: Very simple. Believe in God, speak the truth, and love mankind. There is nothing else to it. This is the message of Islam: the message of peace, the message of love. Islam says that you have two sets of responsibilities; one, your obligations to God; and, two, your obligations to mankind. God says in the Holy Quran, "As far as your obligations to Me are concerned, I would perhaps overlook them, being Magnificent and Merciful; but if your obligations to mankind, to your fellow-beings, have not been fulfilled, I will never excuse you". Look at the magnanimity of the Almighty, and look at the virtues that are sought to be created in a man who believes in the Islamic faith.

Q: Were you born with this faith, or was it something which came to you? I know that you are now extremely devout, a very religious man.

A: I was born in a Muslim family. I have the honour of being the son of a devout father, and an equally devout mother; and I have the privilege of having a better half who is a more devoted Muslim than I am. I consider myself a very humble man. I don't claim to

be a religious authority, or something like that; but I am proud of being a Muslim.

Q : Very few Army Generals became Heads of State.

A : Humility is as much a quality of a soldier, as it should be of a Head of State.

Q : Do you get frightened that one day somebody might come, and take it over from you ?

A : He is most welcome to do so! I am never afraid of this aspect. But I know it will not happen, because we are all engaged in building this country, and we are all looking forward to the opportunity for a peaceful transfer of power.

Q : How do you like the people to look at you? I mean, do you like to be liked, for example? Do you enjoy people liking you, or couldn't you care/less ?

A : No, not quite. It is a human weakness to be liked. To be quite frank, it pleases me when people say here is a man who is "sincere" and "loyal". That is all. It is these two words, which make me much more happy than any other quality that they may attach to me.

Q : Maybe unkind; but there are people in Pakistan who describe you as a dictator.

A : I respect them because they have every right of judging me in whatever manner they like.

Q : Do you feel hurt when people say that about you, or do you feel angry ?

A : No; I pity them, because they have not judged me correctly.

Q : Tell me about your views on civil rights – the freedom of individuals to express an opinion, to redress a grievance, to petition their Government to alter something. What's your stand on civil rights ?

A : Islam was the first religion, or way of life, to have enunciated the principles of human rights to mankind 1400 years ago. As a Muslim, I believe in freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and a man's right to do what he likes. But if the country gives him freedom, then the country expects and demands a certain sense of responsibility in exercising his freedom. So, it has to be freedom with responsibility; not freedom for the sake of freedom, or free for all.

Q : But you have brought in some laws here which restrict freedom of speech, freedom to demonstrate, and freedom to criticise the state ?

A : No, you find that we have, for the time being, stopped only political activity because of certain reasons.

Q : What are they ?

A : Because the kind of political activity being practised in Pakistan was nothing but a disruption of all other activity in the country. All one saw were processions,

burning of buses, looting of shops, violence and lawlessness. That is not my idea of freedom. While politics is excluded, other bodies are expressing themselves freely. We have student unions of elected representatives; we have a large enough labour force and trade union activity; we have associations of various professional groups in the country – doctors, engineers, lawyers. I have stopped political activity because I want some sanity to be brought into our politics; in the way of thinking of our politicians. Once this is achieved they will again be free to indulge in political activity.

Q : You are actually against all politicians, are you not?

A : No, not quite. We are not against individual politicians. We have banned politics, political parties, and political activities.

Q : In particular, you have almost obliterated, totally crushed, the PPP, Mr. Bhutto's old party. You have, it was said to me, in fact, waged a war against them ?

A : No, we have not waged a war against the PPP; but we will not spare anyone who works against the integrity and security of Pakistan.

Q : Is it thought that they are against Pakistan, or do you think it is possibly because they are against you?

A : If they were against me, then let them criticise me by all means. We have never proceeded against anybody for criticising me. We bear no ill-will against those who criticise our laws, or our actions; but, when it

comes to the integrity of Pakistan, then anybody who hijacks a plane, and takes it to Afghanistan and Syria, and demands the release of 54 criminals just because they were the henchmen of a particular party, does not deserve any concession or consideration.

Q: You have arrested a lot of people, haven't you? There are a lot of political prisoners.

A: Not many. I think we can count them on the finger-tips.

Q: I am told the figures run into thousands.

A: Oh. no; at the most they will be – I am sorry, I will not be able to give you the exact figure – not more then a few hundred. That is all.

Q: Why have you arrested them ?

A: Not for their political affiliations. We have arrested those who have been connected with the hijacking; who have been conniving with outside Powers in order to subvert the people's loyalty to Pakistan and its ideology, and to create law and order situation.

Q: You have arrested a lot of members of the PPP during the recent months.

A: Yes, we have arrested Mrs. Bhutto and Miss Bhutto because of their involvement in the hijacking incident.

Q: Are you going to charge them ?

A : Yes, a case is being prepared; they will be taken to a court of law – not a military court, I can assure you. It will be an ordinary civil court, and I will allow the law to take its own course.

Q : You are going to charge them ?

A : Certainly, yes.

Q : What do you think of Miss Bhutto ?

A : I have never had the privilege of meeting her. I can only say that I hope one day she would be a saner person......

Q : Not much common ground between you and her ?

A : No. On ideology, I think, we are poles apart.

Q : You have also suspended certain parts of the Pakistani Constitution, particularly relating to alleged offences against the State. Why have you done that ?

A : We have introduced an amendment in the Constitution in order to ensure that certain categories of offences – and they are very few – tried under the Martial Law regulations, do not go unpunished through interference by the civil courts. Ours is a Martial Law regime, and the people, who have accepted it in the last four long years, expect it to deliver the goods. I found our hands tied to a Constitution which is meant for a political regime of elected representatives of the people. As a result, we were neither effective in improving the law and order

situation, nor productive in our actions. Since the amendment was introduced two months ago, we have had very peaceful conditions in the country; the law and order situation is better; the crime has gone down; and I have not touched a single person so far !

Q : There are a lot of lawyers in jails.

A : No; that is not true.

Q : I spoke in Lahore to members of the Bar Association. They said, there are more than 50 lawyers in jail, most of them who opposed the suspension of this part of the Constitution.

A : We have not arrested anybody who has opposed this amendment to the Constitution. But, as far as I am concerned, whether it is a lawyer, a student, a soldier or a common citizen, anyone who breaks the law must be dealt with under the law. Lawyers are no exception. In fact, I expect them to be more law-abiding; and, if anyone of them breaks law, I will allow the law to take its own course.

Q : You must remember the time when you were just an army officer unburdened with problems of being Head of State. Do you look back with nostalgia on those days, or actually enjoy it, being the boss—the ruler ?

A : I look back with a lot of nostalgia for the position I enjoyed then – a much feared person, and a person with far less responsibilities.

Q : There must be sometimes you must sit back and say to yourself "I am the absolute ruler. I can virtually do anything I like". Is that how you feel like ?

A : No; I never say that to myself. I say, I am a person to whom the people look up for finding solutions to the problems of the country. I have endeavoured to serve the country by bringing it back on its ideological rails. I have taken the lead in introducing Islamic values, and I humbly pray to God that He will bestow on me some success in these endeavours, and then allow me to walk out with dignity and grace, handing over power to another person who will act at least with as much, if not greater, responsibility.

Q : What about your dreams of your country and its future ?

A : No dreams! I have a clear-cut picture of Pakistan emerging as a truly Islamic state. I am not talking about utopia, but of a real state, which is firmly based on the Islamic ideology for which it was created. You know, Pakistan is the first ever country in the whole of human history which was created because of its ideology of Islam. Israel was also created on an ideology, but it came one year after Pakistan. So, the picture that I have is that of Pakistan emerging as a truly Muslim country, free and independent, champion of human rights, and advocate of the Islamic concept of universal brotherhood of mankind.

Q : What do you say about your relationship with the Great Britain ?

A : Very cordial and very friendly. I must take this opportunity of expressing my admiration for the British Government for its principled stand in support of Pakistan over the Afghanistan problem. We have a tremendous regard for your "iron lady" Prime Minister Mrs. Thatcher. Sometimes I say to some of my friends that if there were a few more Prime Ministers, Heads of Government, of her calibre, then the world would have few problems!

Q : What do you like about her?

President: Her frankness, her forthrightness, and her strength of character. She has all the essential qualities of a good leader. Apart from this, you know, we have had many long associations with Great Britain in various capacities in the past; and with the present Government we are enjoying a very friendly and cordial relationship. We have had the honour of the first-ever Labour Prime Minister's visit to Pakistan, that is, Mr. Callaghan; and we are looking forward to Mrs. Thatcher's visit. We have a large Pakistani community in Great Britain. I have always believed that the internal problems of a country are its own affairs. In that context, I would convey a brief message for the Pakistani community, and that is that, as long as they are in Great Britain – whether they are British nationals, or are holding Pakistani nationality – I expect them, the country expects them – to contribute towards the betterment of the society in Great Britain, and to be good and effective members of the community. I know they have some problems, which we have also conveyed to the British Government; but I would expect them to approach the

British authorities in a democratic manner, which is the true character and nature of the country, which is known as the Mother of Parliaments, and is the founding-father of democracy. I think Britain has a unique nature in many ways, and I wish her God-speed and all success.

Interviewer: Thank you, Sir.

RAJENDRA SAREEN

Rajendra Sareen who hails from Amritsar, is currently the Editor of Press Opinion Trends Analyses (POT), a news agency engaged in the specialized study of the affairs of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. In India, he has served with many of the national dailies from time to time. Sareen, a journalist of over 30 years standing, also worked as a special correspondent of the Hindustan Times in Pakistan during 1959-60. In May 1981, he visited Pakistan and interviewed the President.

INTERVIEW TO RAJENDRA SAREEN WEEKLY SUNDAY, INDIA 30-5-1981

Interviewer: What do you feel about the security environment in South-West Asia and the Gulf region, with particular reference to the rivalry among the Super Powers?

President: One should distinguish between events that provoke Super-Power rivalry and those that are its product. Roughly speaking, the problem in South-West Asia, by which I suppose you mean Afghanistan, would belong in the first category, while that in the Gulf region would fall in the second category. It is so because, apart from its strategic importance, the Gulf is the main source of energy for the world, and one Super Power would not like the other Super Power to have exclusive access to it. It is this inherent rivalry which brings the two Super Powers in confrontation in this region.

Afghanistan is not a source of energy, but its strategic value, like that of Pakistan, has a larger sweep than merely serving as a route for the oil-producing Gulf region.

The Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan is a strategic move of far-reaching consequence, inviting an immediate response from the other Super Power. The intrusion of Soviet power into Afghanistan and the exit of American influence from Iran, following the overthrow of the Shah, have given a double strategic advantage to the Soviet

Union. The Iran-Iraq conflict brings the rivalry between the Super Powers into sharper focus.

Further West, this rivalry is reflected in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Lebanese crisis, which is its product. As in the case of the Israeli occupation of the lands of the Arabs, so in the case of the presence of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, we have, as an Islamic and non-aligned country, taken our stand on the basis of fundamental principles.

To confine myself to our immediate neighbourhood, we are seeking a negotiated settlement of the Afghanistan crisis which would ensure the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan; the creation of conditions for the safe and honourable return of the refugees to their homeland; the maintenance of the independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan; and the restoration of the Afghans' right to choose a government of their liking.

Similarly, as a member of the Islamic Peace Committee, we are exerting ourselves to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Iran-Iraq conflict, which is proving so ruinous to the two countries with whom we have brotherly relations and whose losses we consider as our losses.

The qualitative change in the security environment of our region and, in particular, of Pakistan, was expected by us to be seen by India as a development of common concern, opening new opportunities for closer understanding and cooperation. These expectations have not been fulfilled.

Q : The Chinese Prime Minister is due to visit Islamabad for talks with Your Excellency. He will also be visiting Nepal. Later on, the Chinese Foreign Minister is scheduled to visit New Delhi. A few weeks back, Mr. Deng .Xiaoping spoke of China's interest in building up good neighbourly relations between the countries of South Asia. Pakistan has traditionally felt secure in her relations with China. How does Pakistan view China's interest in normalising its relations with India and its new emphasis on supporting good relations among the countries of South Asia?

A : We are greatly looking forward to the visit of His Excellency Zhao Ziyang, who is the Prime Minister of a country with which we have a very close and special relationship. You said that he would also be visiting Nepal. In fact, he would also be visiting Bangladesh after Nepal. Similarly, the Chinese Foreign Minister will be visiting India, as well as Sri Lanka and the Maldives. These goodwill visits are welcomed by us as positive moves towards promoting regional understanding and good-neighbourly relations. Our great Chinese neighbour has always taken the deepest interest in promoting friendship with countries of South Asia, as well as between those countries themselves. Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping's statement, to which you have referred, is only the latest affirmation of this policy of China. Any other motives attributed to Chinese policies are obviously the result of serious misunderstanding or deliberate distortion.

Pakistan views China's interest in normalizing its relations with India, and its effort to promote good

relations among the countries of South Asia, as positive moves which are in harmony with Pakistan's own objectives in the region.

Q : His Excellency, Foreign Minister Agha Shahi recently spoke of Pakistan facing a two-front situation as a result of India and Afghanistan having treaties of friendship with the Soviet Union. This formulation apparently assumes that India and the Soviet Union are in collusion with each other to attack Pakistan. How does one reconcile this formulation with the fact that throughout the 1970s India has consistently refused to become part of Mr. Brezhnev's Asian Security Plan? More specifically, India has taken a categorical stand on the issue of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Mrs. Gandhi's statements, during Mr. Brezhnev's visit to Delhi in December 1980, and, earlier, Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao's statement during his visit to Moscow in June followed by his statement in the *Lok Sabha*, provide ample testimony of India's refusal to acquiesce into the induction of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. At the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers' Conference in Delhi in February this year, there was a close proximity between the India and Pakistan positions on the need for a political settlement. Does not Mr. Shahi's statement amount to judgement being prejudiced by traditional conditioned reflexes ?

A : We cannot overlook the fact that India and the Soviet Union are bound together by the Treaty of August 1971 which, before the end of that year, resulted in the Indian invasion of East Pakistan. Military co-operation between India and the Soviet Union is a

continuous process. With Soviet help, India has built up an enormous military potential, and the new acquisitions of Soviet weaponry for the Indian Armed Forces, already contracted for, would induct more sophisticated military equipment estimated at about eight to ten billion dollars worth in terms of Western prices. This would be in addition to the annual Indian capacity for indigenous production worth about two and-a-half-billion dollars.

The question which naturally arises among our people is as to why this heavy armament programme has been undertaken by India, which faces no threat whatsoever from any of its neighbours.

What with the past experience of Indian forces becoming instrumental in the dismemberment of Pakistan, the continuing hostility towards Pakistan reflected in Indian official and media comments, and the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, the thought of a two-front situation naturally occurs to our people.

Your reference to India's refusal to endorse the Asian Security Plan is somewhat academic, whereas the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 is a fact. Similarly, India's stand on the issue of Soviet troops in Afghanistan has – forgive my saying so – given an impression of equivocation. The lasting impression is that, as between India's commitment to the principles of non-alignment and the obligations it has assumed towards the Soviet Union under the bilateral treaty, the pragmatists' approach has prevailed over the principled stand. We feel that at the Non-Aligned

Movement Conference held at New Delhi recently, our endeavours to keep the movement on its true course saved much embarrassment to India. So let us not talk about conditioned reflexes!

Q : On Afghanistan, the USA does not appear to be aiming at the withdrawal of the Soviet troops as much as to subject the Russians to mounting politico-military costs. Even though Pakistan has a perfectly valid right, in exercise of its national sovereignty, to align with the American objectives, it cannot but result in jeopardising the security of the entire sub-continent. The Soviets have undoubtedly landed themselves in a political disaster in Afghanistan, but militarily it is no more than a stalemate in which the Soviets cannot be forced to leave in the face of the pressure of insurgency, no matter whatever the quantity and nature of sophisticated arms supplied to the rebels by the USA, that is, if Pakistan agrees to serve as a conduit. So far Pakistan has declined to assume this role. In this context, the first priority should be to secure the withdrawal of Soviet troops. If that becomes secondary to the exigencies of US global strategy, then this region may be faced with a *fait accompli*. Your comments please?

A : This question has marvellously twisted mosaic. The pattern is distorted because the lines are infirm. I would not like here to pass judgement on the United States aims, whatever they may be; but must reject immediately and with all the emphasis at my command, the suggestion that there is any propensity on our part to align ourselves with the objectives of US policies.

I must also firmly repudiate the suggestion that the acquisition of arms by Pakistan from the United States will turn Pakistan into a conduit of American arms for the Afghan Mujahideen. Pakistan, under no circumstances, will allow itself to become such a conduit. It has, however, every right to strengthen its defence capability when it is faced with a difficult situation. Pakistan wishes to acquire urgently-needed defence equipment by purchasing it from the United States, which is a traditional source for such shopping. The size of our purchases is obviously limited by the size of the resources at our disposal, which bears no comparison with those of India. The mere prospect of Pakistan being able, after years of deprivation, to replace some of its obsolete defence equipment should not have caused the hue and cry in India which it has. A strong Pakistan, both in terms of economic well-being and defence capability, should be viewed as an asset by India, if all the good intentions you attribute to India are genuine.

One wrong assumption has led to another wrong assumption that Pakistan may be jeopardising the security of the entire sub-continent. A more pertinent observation would be whether or not the intrusion of Soviet military power in our region, resulting indirectly in the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971, and directly in the subversion of Afghanistan's independent and non-aligned status by the Soviet military intervention, is not the main factor in jeopardizing the security of the sub-continent? Is it also not pertinent to ask whether India would not have been in a stronger moral position to pronounce unequivocally on the Soviet military intervention in

Afghanistan, if it had not contracted obligations to the contrary by introducing its Armed Forces in East Pakistan, under cover of the bilateral Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship of 1971 ?

Pakistan contemplates no such treaty with the United States. It has made it quite clear that any development in its relations with the United States must be compatible with its independent non-aligned status and membership of the Organisation of Islamic Conference. Pakistan is certainly not entering into a military-aid relationship with the United States, and there is no question of its giving bases on its territory to the United States. One of the imperatives of our foreign policy is never to get ourselves involved, in any way whatsoever, in the rivalry of the Super Powers.

I regret to say that such generalizations show a remarkable twist of the imagination. I have already answered the main question in regard to our policy towards Afghanistan in reply to an earlier question by you. We oppose the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan on the basis of principles, and certainly not by military means, which is not even conceivable. We have good relations with the Soviet Union, and wish to develop them further. The Afghanistan crisis is not of our making, and constitutes an aberration in our relations with the Soviet Union, which we hope would be corrected in due course by the logic of events. We have even the beginnings of a dialogue with the Soviet Union on the question of Afghanistan, in which the United Nations Secretary General is involved through his Personal Representative.

I agree with you that the first priority should be to secure the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. I have already stated in an earlier reply that the highest priority in our search for a negotiated settlement of the Afghanistan crisis is to bring this about.

Q : How does Pakistan view itself in geo-strategic terms ? In the regional sense, is it the front garden of the sub-continent opening out on West Asia, or is it the extension of West Asia into the sub-continent? Does any special privilege attach to repudiating Pakistan's historical ties with the sub-continent? In any event, geographically, Pakistan remains a part of the sub-continent, does n't it ?

A : Pakistan is neither an extension of Middle East into South Asia, nor the front-garden of South Asia opening out on West Asia; it has a personality and identity of its own. Your question also implies that there is a contradiction between Pakistan's links with its South Asian neighbours and its neighbours to the West. Pakistan has important ties and interests in both regions, and is making efforts to strengthen its cooperation with both. In today's world of fast communications and global inter-dependence, it would be pedantic to fit any country in a geographical pigeon-hole.

Q : Pakistan is understandably interested in the security of the Gulf region. So is India. Pakistan's primary emphasis is on Islamic bonds. Secular India's principal objective is security of a neighbouring region, because disturbed conditions in the Gulf cannot leave South

Asia in peace. With the Gulf countries, India has had very close brotherly relations. There really is no conflict in this sphere because of the policies of both India and Pakistan, proceeding from different premises, converge on a single objective. In the event, should there not be close collaboration between the two countries in pursuit of the common objective ?

A : It is true that Pakistan has close Islamic bonds with countries in the Gulf region, but Pakistan is also, like India, a close neighbour of the countries in the area. Its interest in the security and peace of the region stems from both these considerations. However, we are committed to the Makkah Declaration, and have always supported the Gulf States' position that the security of the region is the exclusive responsibility of the littoral states themselves, without outside interference. Pakistan is not a littoral state of the Gulf, and has no role to play in ensuring the security of the region. The question of collaborating with any other country for this purpose does not therefore arise. Our relations with the Gulf states are very fraternal. We wish them well, and do not view India's efforts to develop good relations with them in a spirit of rivalry.

Q : India and Pakistan today find themselves in a situation in which the geo-strategic imperatives have assumed a dimension that both have to take a fresh look at the whole gamut of factors which determine their relationship. It is no longer possible for either of them to devise a security framework on the basis of looking away from each other, because in that event each of them has the capacity to render infructuous whatever the other seeks to achieve. Conceptually, in

exercise of their national sovereignty they certainly have the right to do so, but do the geo-strategic imperatives admit of such an attitude?

A: I entirely agree with you that the imperatives of the geo-political situation call for closer understanding between India and Pakistan. Such an understanding must be based on a sympathetic appreciation of each other's security concerns; but it must also reflect full respect for the principle of sovereign equality, which implies that each country is free to develop and maintain friendly relations with a variety of countries. Friendship with any country should not be directed against any other country. That is, in fact, the essence of non-alignment.

Q: Two major developments have changed the entire security context in South Asia, particularly insofar as India and Pakistan are concerned. The first is the intervention of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. The second is the great importance that the security of the Gulf region has assumed. In respect of both these developments, neither India, nor Pakistan, can independently evolve a viable policy framework in isolation from each other. The nature and character of the two developments is such that unless India and Pakistan act in concert with each other, the consequences arising out of this failure on their part cannot but result in endangering their mutual security and thereby undermining their national sovereignty. How would Your Excellency react to the proposition that in geo-strategic terms, Pakistan and India can either weaken each other, by working at cross purposes, or strengthen each other, through cooperation and

goodwill?

A : I believe I have answered all the various components of this complex question in reply to your earlier questions which have covered the subject fully.

Q : Pakistan undoubtedly has the right, in exercise of its national sovereignty, to seek arms from the USA or anywhere else. So has India an unfettered right, in exercise of its national sovereignty, to seek military supplies from wherever it can and also strengthen its defence forces to make them fighting fit for meeting whatever challenge the country may be confronted with. But when all that has been said, the question still remains that security encompasses a lot more than collection of arms and ammunition. The point to appreciate is that India and Pakistan are natural partners in the geo-strategic sense. Pakistan is the extension of India's defence, while India is the depth and infrastructure, body and mass, technology and resources without which Pakistan cannot sustain its defence should a threat emerge from outside the sub-continent. There are, of course, political impediments, but a careful look at the factors involved would bear out that there is neither an issue, nor a cause, over which either of them has anything to gain by opting for an armed conflict. Is it not desirable for our two countries to reconcile with the logic of this situation?

A : I am glad that you appreciate that both Pakistan and India have an equal right, as sovereign states, to acquire military supplies from whatever source they consider necessary for their defence. If you look at

the record, this has been precisely our position. What we do not understand is why India wants to deny this right to Pakistan. This reflects an adversary perception of Pakistan on India's part which contradicts your statement that the two countries are natural partners in a geo-strategic sense. If the logic of your statement should find greater acceptance in India, things would be far better in the sub-continent. Unfortunately, statements continue to come forth from your country which do not contribute to the process of confidence-building, which is so necessary if our countries and peoples are to co-exist as good neighbours.

Q : Pakistan is an important littoral state of the Indian Ocean. From that point of view, how do you view the US build-up in the Diego Garcia and the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean? Would not the Super-Power rivalry in this region get further accentuated as a result of the US bid for 'strategic consensus'?

A : Pakistan's policy on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace has been clearly enunciated and reiterated at the United Nations. There are two essential ingredients of this policy : First, all great power rivalry must be eliminated from this area; and, secondly, the littoral states must simultaneously evolve a regimen which would ensure the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the littoral and hinterland states and ensure that no one state acquires a status of hegemony in the area. Within this framework, there is no place for a US bid for a "strategic consensus", nor for Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

Q : Last year, when President Carter rushed to offer aid to Pakistan, Your Excellency had expressed Pakistan's reluctance to accept the same without careful consideration of what it involved so that your "national interests do not get violated, by, or are not in conflict with the US interests? Are you now satisfied on this count?

A : We subjected the offer of assistance to Pakistan made by President Carter last year to careful scrutiny, and found it wanting both in credibility and durability. The Reagan Administration has made a new offer, which is an improvement and is being equally carefully examined. As I have said earlier, our acceptance or rejection of it would depend on whether or not we consider it to be supporting or disrupting our independent, non-aligned status and our membership of the Islamic Conference.

Q : Whatever role has been earmarked for Pakistan by the USA in its objective of building up a 'strategic consensus' in the Gulf region, there can be no doubt that the determining factor will be the global strategy of the USA in supersession of whatever objectives Pakistan might have in opting to join this arrangement. A number of US strategists have openly discussed the possibility that the US might have to physically intervene in the Gulf even though the countries of the region have refused to acquiesce in this concept. The other US interest is to have home-port facilities in the region, possibly in Pakistan. What happens if the US seeks from Pakistan some *quid pro quo* which is not consistent with your membership of the Non-Aligned Movement?

A : Your concern about the US objectives of including Pakistan in a "strategic consensus" in the Gulf region, or seeking homeport facilities in Pakistan, have been a recurring theme of your questions. This should not be so. I have repeatedly stated that Pakistan is a signatory of the Makkah Declaration, which rules out its participation in any "strategic consensus" of the kind you speak of. I would reiterate this position once again, and reaffirm that the question does not arise of our conceding any bases to the United States, since that would be inconsistent with our membership of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Q : The USA is seeking to evolve a 'strategic consensus' in the Gulf as part of its global strategy. The Soviet Union would not countenance that. Even before the concept has unfolded itself in concrete terms, the crisis in Lebanon, created by the Israeli intransigence, has demonstrated the tenuous basis of the US assumption. Saudi Arabia has backed up Syria unmindful of the latter's military links with the Soviet Union. How does Pakistan evaluate the situation developing in Lebanon?

A : We are deeply concerned at the present strife in Lebanon, the blame for which rests entirely with Israel. The crisis in Lebanon has been stirred up by the Zionist entity who, by inciting communal tensions, wishes to browbeat Syria and establish its hegemony over the whole region, particularly Lebanon. The problem in Lebanon is not of a sectarian nature, as Israel attempts to portray and exploit it for its own purposes, but of reaffirming Lebanon's unity, sovereignty and independence.

Pakistan fully supports the efforts of the Arab countries in this regard.

Q : The US loans for purchase of arms are going to add substantially to Pakistan's national debt liability. At the close of last fiscal year, it stood at around £ 10 billion. In 1979, US refusal to accommodate Pakistan on debt rescheduling had created a situation so that, while the inflow of fresh foreign aid was around 800 million dollars, the outflow was 720 million dollars. This resulted in a serious economic crisis for Pakistan. Now the pressure has eased because the US is interested in accommodating Pakistan. But if Pakistan falls out of step with the US in the latter's pursuit of strategic consensus, the 1979 situation can be recreated. Does this not introduce an element of uncertainty for Pakistan?

A : While it is true that Pakistan, like many other developing countries, faces an enormous economic problem on account of servicing of its debts, there are a number of unacceptable and facile premises on which this question is based. The entire discussion between US and Pakistan centres around the principles on which a bilateral relationship is going to be built. If, as I have said elsewhere, the US accepts, and indeed shows, respect for Pakistan's policy of non-alignment and for its commitments to the Islamic world, the US cannot expect that Pakistan will form part of what is called the 'strategic consensus'. NAM and the OIC are dedicated to evolving common grounds between their members, which steer clear of super power rivalries. The Government of US and Pakistan have both indicated that clearly defined perceptions must constitute

the basis for their relationship so that room for uncertainty is eliminated as far as possible. We do not, therefore, anticipate the kind of situation that you envisage.

Q : A few months back Mrs. Gandhi wrote to you underscoring India's commitment to Pakistan's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. This does not seem to have had any significant impact on the media, more particularly the Government-owned. Earlier this month, Mrs. Gandhi made highly conciliatory statements in the course of an interview with Mr. M. B. Naqvi of the daily Muslim. For that Mrs. Gandhi has been accused, by the paper editorially, of double-talk and double-think. If she says nothing, she is termed cold and aloof. If she comes forth with sentiments of goodwill, she is dubbed clever. In the circumstances, how does one proceed ?

A : This question is most unfortunately worded and could lure one into passing judgements on the credibility of the media, or worse, of Prime Minister Gandhi herself. We have great respect for Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and would wish her to take a more sympathetic view of Pakistan, its problems and its policies which exclude ill-will towards India. The Prime Minister has made many statements in which talk of war has been rather a prominent feature. There have been similar bellicose statements from a number of well-placed Indian commentators. These have evoked responses from our media, sometimes of matching acerbity. All I can say is that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi must be left alone to create her own image in Pakistan by the quality of her statements.

Q : Going by the comment in the media, there seems to be a widely-held belief in Pakistan that India is inimical to Pakistan's continuance as a nation-state. Would you, Mr. President, be pleased to comment on the validity of the theory that India is out to destroy Pakistan in pursuit of the mythical objective of 'Akhand Bharat'? Incidentally, this is a phrase more prevalent in Pakistan than in India where annulment of partition is not even a subject of small-talk, leave alone serious discussion.

A : Fears in regard to India's intentions originate in the written and spoken word of opinion-makers in India. You are aware of the recent statements critical of Pakistan, which have appeared in your prestigious press, and unfriendly utterances by well-known personalities known to be close to the Prime Minister. Less of such statements would produce more of the kind of responses in Pakistan which you cherish.

Q : Purely as a political arrangement, India has no reason to be unhappy with the division of the sub-continent into Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The 3-nation polity is entirely feasible and perfectly viable. However, geo-strategically, this land mass very much remains indivisible. During the last 34 years, the strategic environment of the sub-continent as a whole was, by and large, peaceful and free from turmoil. So India and Pakistan could pursue whatever course they desired, even if it brought them into mutual conflicts, or resulted in estrangement and isolation from each other. But, has it not already become impossible to continue on that basis ?

A : I agree with you that the change in the geo-political situation, resulting from the developments in Afghanistan, calls for closer relations between the countries of South Asia. We should try to build an atmosphere in which these countries do not feel threatened by each other, but view each other's strength as their own. A strong Pakistan should be seen as a bulwark for India, and not as a threat.

Q : No political arrangement can survive for any length of time if it becomes incompatible with the geo-strategic imperatives of the area to which it relates. National sovereignty, of course, is inviolable; the right of a government to act in its exercise is absolutely unfettered. But, even so, there are very definite constraints implicit in the operation of this concept, inasmuch as it cannot be exercised in isolation from the compulsions of regional strategic security. If policies formulated, in exercise of national sovereignty, tend to render immediate neighbours, or an entire region in which a particular country is located, vulnerable to security hazards, those cannot but prove counter-productive. Regional security, through cooperation among sovereign nations, is not in derogation of national sovereignty. In the face of the contemporary realities in this part of the world, are not regional security arrangements, without directing them against one super power or the other, a *sine qua non* for consolidation of peace and territorial integrity of the nations concerned?

A : Your ideas about the limitations of options of an individual country in the context of regional considerations may be sound in theory, but are fraught

with dangerous implications. As sovereign states, each country in a region has the right to judge its own problems of security in realistic terms and adopt measures to ensure it. To deny this right to a sovereign state is to subscribe to a theory of hegemonism. In ensuring their security, the states concerned naturally take into account all the factors, including the imperative need of eschewing aggressive designs against their neighbours. Disregard of the regional factor of security automatically defeats the very objective of building a favourable security environment for the state concerned itself. Regional situations of cooperation in all fields develop naturally from a state of normal and friendly relations between the members of the group when common interests are perceived by all of them to be transcending parochial interests and bilateral differences. The responsibility for creating such an atmosphere of confidence falls heavier on the shoulders of the larger entities.

Q : The Simla Agreement was evolved to deal with the aftermath of the 1971 war. In doing that it worked out a framework for the normalisation of bilateral relations. Meanwhile, there are new geo-strategic developments which require a much larger framework of cooperation between the two countries if they are not to drift apart down the slippery path of antagonism. Your comments please?

A : I feel that the Simla Agreement provided an adequate and a comprehensive framework for the normalisation of Indo-Pakistan relations. This agreement has worked satisfactorily over the past eight or nine years, and should continue to guide our efforts to

bring the two countries closer together. It is not clear what you mean by a "larger framework". If we could implement all the provisions of the Simla Agreement in letter and in spirit, that itself would ensure permanent peace and friendship between our two countries. It is premature to talk of a larger framework when the existing framework has yet to reach fulfilment.

Q : Thirty-four years after partition, India and Pakistan have neither a cause, nor an issue, which should keep them in conflict with each other. But certain emotional hang-ups are still operating as negative diplomatic inputs. What can be done by the Governments of the two countries so that they build up mutual confidence and dispel each other's apprehensions?

A : The Simla Agreement, for which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi must take full credit, rules out war as a means of settling disputes between Pakistan and India. Both countries are committed, under this Agreement, to seek peaceful settlement of issues which are outstanding. Emotional hang-ups are prolonged, and mistrust and suspicions are kept alive, by the continuing lack of a mutually satisfactory settlement of divisive issues. Such a situation lends itself also to political exploitation by interested parties.

While the process of dialogue between our two countries continues, it is best, in my view, that the two sides eschew statements which deliberately create a sense of crisis. On the positive side, the atmosphere of relations between the two countries

would be greatly improved if India adopts a rational attitude towards Pakistan's legitimate efforts to acquire a defence capability commensurate with the developing threats to its security. Pakistan is the smaller country, and has neither the desire, nor the capacity, to build a military strength in competition or rivalry with India. India should realise that, even if our current talks with the United States yield the maximum expected results, Pakistan, in the course of the next five years, would have acquired a limited defence capability through purchases only, equivalent to 1/5th of India's acquisition of the most modern military equipment during the past three years, and that which has already been contracted for and will be received in the near future. All this would be in addition to India's vast indigenous production capacity. As against this, the arms embargoes, imposed in the past by the United States, have severely restricted Pakistan's efforts to acquire any defence equipment from US sources worth mentioning during the past five years.

If the factual position of the capabilities and intentions of each country is conveyed accurately and in a forthright manner to its people, we should hear less of the talk of war or prophecies of impending doom. The political leadership, as well as the media on both sides, have a vital role to play in educating public opinion on the right lines. Facts, responsibly presented, would automatically correct the distorted images seen through the emotional looking-glass.

Q: One of the psychological impediments in building up mutual confidence is the feeling in Pakistan that

closer relations between the two countries would erode her national sovereignty. There is no rational justification for that. Would you agree that the many common links of culture, heritage, history, geography, language and shared oriental values are not incompatible with the fact of three sovereign nations inhabiting the sub-continent?

A : Culture, heritage, history, geography, language and values, like the Seas and the Oceans, can unite or divide, depending on your capacities and intentions in regard to their use.

Pakistan and India have, indeed, a great deal in common in all these fields, which provide firm foundation for the development of a mutually supportive relationship. A great responsibility rests on the political leadership and opinion-making agencies of our two countries to exploit the potentialities of these powerful factors in a positive manner. We live in a world of hard realities, where the richer side of our heritage is often sacrificed at the altar of political ambitions. When we have made a correct appreciation of a problem, we have already taken the first positive step towards its solution. I assure you that Pakistan has enough self-confidence to enter into a mutually beneficial relationship with India, provided India fulfils its obligations, as the largest country in South Asia, to act and speak in a manner which would induce a sense of confidence and security in its smaller neighbours.

Interviewer : The pace of cultural exchanges between India and Pakistan has been utterly disappointing. The intellec-

tuals of the two countries have to inter-act through the academic institutions and intellectuals of the USA, the UK and Europe. Should there not be seminars of intellectuals from both countries to probe the underlying causes which prevent the two countries from coming closer in brotherly relations?

President : We have already touched upon the subject of culture and related fields in the context of an earlier question by you. You would agree with me that the extent and range of contacts between our peoples, in the fields of travel, sports, literary activities and music and exchange of visits by officials, politicians and journalists alike, have greatly increased since my Government assumed office. We shall continue our endeavours in this direction, and have no doubt that such exchanges would further increase in response to the overall improvement in the atmosphere of the relations between our two countries which we keenly desire.

ROWLAND EVANS

Rowland Evans is an American syndicated newspaper columnist. He is an experienced journalist. He has served Associated Press from 1945 to 1955. He also worked as staff members of New York Herald Tribune from 1955 to 1963.

Rowland has written a number of books on various topics. He is the author of "Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power", "Nixon in the White House", "The Frustration of Power" and "The Reagan Revolution". He visited Pakistan in 1981 and interviewed the President on 4 June 1981.

INTERVIEW TO
ROWLAND EVANS
AMERICAN JOURNALIST

4-6-1981

Interviewer: Let me ask you first, Sir: I hear a lot of reports in Washington, and I have heard some here, that the Soviets are not very reticent in their statements about what they regard as an unfriendly act – and what I regard as the courage of Pakistan – in dealing with the tremendously difficult refugee problem here and the insurgency situation in Afghanistan. The way you have handled the refugees – perhaps two million – pouring from across your borders, is really an example for the whole world; but, I am told, that the Soviets are not shy of conducting a hostile campaign against you; perhaps "threat" is too strong a word for it.

President : I think you are right. . . . .

Q : But Mr. President, if this influx of refugees continues, nobody can predict what is going to happen. Can you continue to handle and to support that tremendous new population? This is the biggest refugee population that I can think of in the world today.

A : Yes, I understand that this is the largest influx of refugees, including the Palestinians, Vietnamese, Somalis and anybody else in Africa you can think of. But, I think, the feeling on both sides – the Afghans and the Pakistanis – is one of a human bond, and a bond of religion. We, Pakistanis, have taken this as a

matter of duty to help these our neighbours and brothers-in-faith, in their hour of grief. And, Mr. Evans, you know, that for nearly a year, we bore the brunt of the entire burden of Afghan refugees all by ourselves. It is only in the last nine months or so that the world community has joined us, particularly after December 1979.

Q : And there have been very few incidents among the refugees and the local people that I can gather, hardly two or three.

A : Hardly any. And mind you, in certain areas the refugee population is bigger than the local population.

Q : And they have arms; some of them ?

A : Most of them have arms. It is a part of their tribal custom. Unless he has a weapon of some sort, the male member of the tribe feels he is not properly dressed. But you were asking about our capacity to absorb further influx. At the present moment, the refugees are coming at the rate of nearly hundred thousand a month. At this rate, we would be touching 2.5 to 3 million mark in not too distant a future this year, because I do not see the Russians getting out of Afghanistan; nor the insurgency decreasing in its intensity; and the reprisals will continue to be on the locals who will be forced to leave their country and come to Pakistan. But, I think, Pakistan has still got the mental and physical capacity to take in some more refugees. I hope to God that we will be able to bear this responsibility.

Q : What is the conceivable, understandable way in which this can end? The Soviets certainly are not going to pull out.

A : No, they won't. This is the concern of Pakistan and, in my opinion, of the free world today. This is the concern of the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Conference, and the Non-Aligned Movement, all of whom have supported the principled stand of Pakistan.

Q : Mr. President, you are a noted military authority. In your opinion, would the Soviets exert political or military pressure on you?

A : They would try both. They have already tried a kind of military pressure. They have knocked at some of our posts, not in a typical hot pursuit, but in an effort to chase some of the freedom-fighters. It is the freedom-fighters' activities in Afghanistan which is keeping the Soviets engaged inside that country. The day the freedom-fighters lose their present position, or freedom of action they have now in Afghanistan, from that day onwards life for Pakistan would be that much more difficult.

Q : You think the Indians are consciously aligning themselves with the Soviets in this Afghan operation, or you think they are just playing the role of a kind of stooge? The Soviets are feeding the Indians a lot of weapons; in return, they may be asking for certain help on the political side; or, you think, the Indians are really interested in having the Soviets continue this kind of business in South Asia?

A: Privately, the Indians have one view, and publicly another. In my conversation with Madame Gandhi, she told me herself that what had happened in Afghanistan was not right. But when I suggested that this view be expressed openly and forcefully, she said that was not the way to deal with the Russians. She added that one cannot force them, and have got to try persuasion with them. I said, "Then, please, since you are the bigger partner in the region, and more friendly to the Russians, why don't you persuade them?"

Privately, we are also told by the Indians not to worry about eastern frontiers which are bordering on India, and that we should concentrate on our western borders. We remind them that 75 per cent of the Indian forces are facing Pakistan on our eastern borders, and that – once bitten twice shy – it was as a result of the connivance of India and the Soviet Union that Pakistan was dismembered only ten years ago.

So, my own feeling is this that, while in their heart of hearts they may be convinced that the Russians are in the wrong, and that it is the moral duty of India to join the free world in condemning Soviet action, they are not prepared to annoy the Russians. If this is the Indian policy, I don't see that it will be right on our part to say India is acting as a Russian stooge. India is too big a country, to be a stooge of the Soviet Union. The fact of the matter is that, having entered into a treaty of friendship with Russia, and being showered with the blessings of Russian military hardware and equipment worth

billions of dollars, why should India pick up a quarrel with the Soviets on behalf of Pakistan – a country that the Indians regard, perhaps, as a thorn in their side ?

Q : What is the prospect of the United States and Pakistan working something out? I understand, Mr. President, you and your Government are not at all interested in any kind of formal alliance, or treaty, or anything that approaches that, for reasons I think I understand. Is that correct ?

A : There is a fundamental issue involved in it. With the United States of America, Mr. Evans, as you must be aware, we had one of the finest of relationships, which, apart from bilateral understanding, was based on common membership of certain military pacts. We were a member of the Baghdad Pact to start with, backed up by the United States of America. We were a member of the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation, also backed up by the United States. The successor of Baghdad Pact was the CENTO, and we were its member. But we found that, despite these pacts and alliances, when the crunch came, we were left high and dry. I don't dispute that it may not have been in the interest of the United States of America to uphold Pakistan at the expense of India, or that the United States of America may have acted the way it did to show its neutrality. But, surely, in times of trial, an alliance member is justified in expecting help from another member, particularly with whom it has one of the finest of relationships. Now, let me give you the Chinese example in that very position in 1965. It is a different story that the Chinese and the

Indians had had a skirmish, three years ago. But, when we approached them, the Chinese went out of their way to help us, and even gave an ultimatum to the Indians. Mind you, at that time, in 1965, we were member of the SEATO, an organisation which was formed to check the expansion of Chinese communism in the South-East Asia.

Q : What is the way to approach the relationship with the United States now, in your opinion ?

A : At the present moment, we are engaged in a very fruitful dialogue with the new Administration. We are negotiating for a package deal, covering military sales programme and economic assistance to Pakistan. The Symington Amendment may come in the way of this, but we have been assured that the Administration is doing its best to get over the problem. We hope they will. The United States has offered to sell us military hardware against interest-bearing loans it would advance to us, provided we make initial purchases through our own resources, or with the help of friends.

Q : The Saudis are helpful in this, possibly ?

A : The Saudis have always been extremely helpful to us; but it is difficult to expect them to meet all the requirements of Pakistan.

Q : I agree, that is a lot to ask. And where else is it possible? Doesn't Afghan situation help in this respect?

A : No; it is because of the Afghan situation – the regional situation – that, except for our Muslim friends, others are reluctant to help us lest they should annoy India. We have said, on more than one occasion, that we are not in competition with India; nor do we want any confrontation with her. They are 650 million people against Pakistan's 84 million. They are bigger not only in population, but in all respects. Why should Pakistan be foolhardy or stupid enough to compete with India? It is in our interest to have friendly relation with India, and that is what we are trying to develop. At the same time, Pakistan has made it quite clear that these relations will have to be based on terms of equality as between two sovereign states. We will not be dictated to by anybody, nor has anyone the right of veto on the nature of our relationship with others, be it the United States of America or any other country.

Q : You have not had a conversation, Sir, yet with Alexander Haig? Is he coming here?

A : He is going to China this month; but, later on, he may visit Pakistan.

Q : He is a great admirer of yours. Probably you know it?

A : He is a very fine man, I am told.

Q : Can you give a time, Sir, beyond which the U.S. military sales to Pakistan should not be delayed?

A : The most crucial period for Pakistan's security is

between now and October 1982. When I say October, it is not because of your fiscal year; it is due to the winter season in Afghanistan, and its effect on troop movements.

Q : Is India afraid of China? They had a series of little border wars in 1962.

A : When one is afraid of a neighbour, then one adopts two courses: one strengthens oneself militarily; and one seeks some form of political understanding through diplomatic means; both the courses are complementary to each other. Now, India is strengthening itself militarily. Let us look at her inventory. She has acquired Jagaur aircraft from Britain, and T-72 tanks from Russia, besides a host of mechanised vehicles, artillery pieces, SAMS, etc. If all military hardware could be used against China, then it could be said that India was afraid of China. But Jagaur aircraft cannot reach anywhere near the Chinese mainland from India, nor can T-72 tanks operate on the mountainous terrain along the Sino-Indian border. With 18,000 feet high Himalayan range between them, India and China can man border posts, but not employ large-scale armies in the region. On the other hand, 70 per cent of India's armed forces are concentrated against Pakistan. So, are the Indians afraid of China, or are they trying to browbeat Pakistan?

Q : What is your relationship with China? You have a treaty of friendship or anything else?

A : No, there is no such treaty. In fact, there is nothing in

writing. Yet Pakistan's relationship is solid; it is based on mutual trust and confidence; and it is not directed against any country, least of all India.

Q : Do you have a genuine relationship with Indira? When you talk, does she believe you, and when she talks, do you believe her?

A : For my part, I can say that I have tried my best; we have met face-to-face only once. That was in Salisbury when I went to attend Zimbabwe's Independence Day celebrations.

Q : How long a meeting did you have?

A : One hour or so. We had a very frank exchange of views; and, since then, I have written to her: I have talked to her on the telephone; and I have genuinely tried to convince her that we want good relationship. We only hope she is convinced that we are genuine about it.

Q : Is their Foreign Minister coming here soon?

President : Mr. Narsimha Rao is expected here on the 8th of June.

Interviewer : Thank you, very much.

INTERVIEW TO
INDIAN JOURNALISTS

9-6-1981

President : Welcome to Pakistan, gentlemen of the Indian Press! I am delighted to have this opportunity of meeting you, among whom are a few familiar faces also. I hope you don't get me wrong. This is not a Press Conference. I thought that if we just met informally, and got to know each other's mind, and clarified some of the doubts in the minds of the countrymen of the two countries, we would have done a good job.

I have stressed this a number of times, and I can produce evidence in support, that it is Pakistan's desire to have very friendly relations with India. Unfortunately, we have had a very chequered record of our relationship during the last 34 years. We have fought three wars. And here, today, you see a soldier extending the hand of friendship to India. I must also mention here that we are very grateful for the encouraging response of the Government of India, and particularly for what we have heard from Mr. Narsimha Rao. your Foreign Minister. I want to take this opportunity to convey to your Prime Minister, to your Government and, more so, to the people of India, that we are seeking a tension-free relationship with our neighbour. I have always said – and I am sure you can see the sincerity in my statement – that we are not in competition with India; that we have our own place, and India has its own place. India is a bigger country in the region, and it must play that big a role. However, we want a relationship which is

based on dignity, honour and sovereign equality; on honesty of purpose, reciprocity, and mutual respect; and I don't think that is too much to ask. I don't want to take any more of your time; but I am at your disposal to answer any questions that you may have.

Interviewer: Mr. President, you have said that the two countries have their own roles: India is a larger country, Pakistan has its own role. What specifically do you mean by a different role for each country?

A: No; I don't mean that each one of us has a different role. We don't want to go in different directions. What I want to say is that India, being a larger country, can play a bigger role in generating confidence among the smaller countries in the region, and in economic development. India, as a big power in South-East Asia, and as founder-member of the Non-Aligned Movement of which we are also a member, has an important role to play. Pakistan, while an integral part of this region, also aligns itself with the Muslim world, and can thus have some additional responsibilities. Together, we should complement each other's strength, and cover each other's weakness.

Q: Sir, there is an impression in India that, sometime during last year, the Indian side tried to evolve some sort of a regional approach in view of the new developments, and that the response from Pakistan, at one stage, appeared to be positive; but then, things went in a different way. What do you say about that?

A: We are all in favour of evolving a strategy of regional

approach. But what we have been advocating is a step-by-step approach. We were told that India would welcome such an approach provided no bilateral matters were raised at the regional conference. I entirely agree that one should not have individual squabbles in a regional conference, but then the idea behind getting together is to resolve differences and achieve consensus. The ASEAN, for example, helped in resolving the differences between Malaysia and Indonesia; the Commonwealth decided on a common course of action on the South African issue; the Organisation of Islamic Conference agreed on a principled stand on the Afghanistan issue.

Q : So, this was exactly what I had in mind. On Afghanistan, it was India which had some sort of a regional consensus.

A : I am talking of a more fundamental issue – that of approach by the seven countries when their Foreign Secretaries recently met in Sri Lanka; and that approach is not confined to our outlook only on Afghanistan; it has a much wider connotation. So, Pakistan is in favour of regional cooperation; but there should be a step-by-step approach so that it develops into a positive, dynamic organisation capable of looking after our regional interests.

Q : Mr. President, just now you said that the smaller countries around India are having a feeling of insecurity. Now we have been given an impression that India would like to know what assurances, what actions would these smaller countries of the area – they call themselves smaller, we don't consider them

smaller, not Pakistan, please – what specific assurances would be required from our Prime Minister or our Government to remove that sense of insecurity?

A : I will give you one example. Over the years, India has been acquiring military hardware. Not even once has Pakistan asked as to why India is getting arms and equipment from the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, Germany, the United States of America, etc. It is none of Pakistan's concern. India is the best judge of what its defence requirements are. Now, whenever Pakistan acquires arms, the Indian Government starts shouting that all these are meant to be used against India. There is something in this, you know, that gives one a feeling of uneasiness, almost of sadness. So when I talk of generating confidence, I mean, why question each other's *bonafides;* why have doubts amongst ourselves?

Q : Can I intervene here? India has never objected to commercial purchase of arms by Pakistan. India has not also been against Pakistan acquiring arms. What has been said by our Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, is that we are not insensitive to Pakistan's defence needs; what we are afraid of is the coming in of greater military alliance in which Pakistan – and it is not Pakistan, but the total impact of the Big Power rivalry that will arise. We know that you said that you would not be getting into that. But, then, as Haig has talked of a security consensus, that is why these doubts arise: not because Pakistan is acquiring arms.

A : Proceeding from your assumption, let me ask you: if India cannot be sucked in with eight billion dollars

worth of military hardware being given to it on concessional terms by the Soviet Union, then why should you assume that Pakistan would be sucked in with 400 million dollars worth of military purchases from the United States of America, and when India is also buying from the same shop? Why should doubts be created in the minds of India, particularly when Pakistan is trying to replace some of its obsolescent equipment.

Q : Mr. President, one part of the question has not been answered. What exactly would you like India to do to remove the feeling of insecurity amongst the smaller neighbours ?

A : Well, to start with a lot of goodwill, and goodwill is priceless. I think, with India and Pakistan having goodwill for each other and seeking to remove doubts and to generate confidence, that would be the first sure step towards normalisation of relations.

Q : Mr. President, the people of the two countries want friendly relations. It would be very helpful if you could somewhat concretize what steps could be taken in order to immediately improve relations ?

A : The two Foreign Ministers have had very good discussions so far; I'll have the opportunity of meeting Mr. Narsimha Rao in about another hour-and-a-half, and we will discuss ways and means of creating confidence between the two countries. You are very right in observing that the two people want friendly relations. We want this goodwill to go to the highest level. I am very grateful to your Prime Minister, Mrs.

Indira Gandhi, for her encouraging response, reflected in the exchange of views on regional matters we have had so far in our correspondence. I think this has to be taken a step higher, so that all apprehensions are removed and there is an open-door policy between India and Pakistan.

Q : Mr. President, you said an open-door policy. Why don't you abolish the visa system? It should go a long way in helping people to visit each other; the journalists will also visit each other.

A : We are not averse to this, and are prepared to discuss it with India at any time. In any case, we will benefit more by abolishing the visa system, because we have a lot more people going to India, than people coming from that side, though we hope more people will come from India. We, who are in this room today, have been eye-witnesses to the creation of Pakistan. We first fought together for independence from the British and, then, through a political process, decided to carve Pakistan out of the sub-continent by mutual agreement. Now that Pakistan and India have been in existence for the last 34 years, we should try and develop a relationship of greater depth and strength so that we can draw benefit from each other's existence. This is what I am trying to say.

Q : Mr. President, quite rightly you have said this; but there is a feeling in our country that there is some feeling in Pakistan that India wants to finish Pakistan. We, on our part, have never said that we want Pakistan back in India. I don't know why this feeling persists in Pakistan. What is your assessment of that?

A : In a way, you are right; I know that there is a feeling – a very strong feeling – in certain quarters that India has not reconciled itself to the idea of the existence of Pakistan. I do not know, why. We have fought three wars in 34 years. This is perhaps a record in history; no neighbouring nations have fought so many wars in such a short period! However, let us turn over a new leaf, of peace, tranquillity and good neighbourly relations. In this, the journalistic community in both countries can play an important role by educating the people, by writing on constructive lines, and by not trying to make mountains out of mole-hills, which sometimes they do.

Q : One of the impediments we hear is some kind of a fear in Pakistan that there will be a cultural invasion, if exchange visits develop, especially at the level of films, musicians and other such sections. Now, is that really an impediment and, if it is so, how are we going to tackle it ?

A : No, it is not so. There is no such fear. But you cannot take individual examples. We are trying to develop our film industry, and have, therefore, to give it certain protection against better quality foreign films by restricting their import. Your pictures are so attractive and so popular that if we allow their import, nobody will go to see the Pakistani films.

Q : This is one specific thing; but in other fields, for instance, poets or relations. Now Mehdi Hasan and a number of other poets and singers came to India and they got a massive reception.

A : There is a certain thing called ideology. I don't want to sound very pedantic; but let me explain it this way. Pakistan came into being on the basis of the two-nation theory, that is, as a nation having a different culture, a different ideology. Now, according to our Islamic faith, dancing by women generally, and particularly in public is taboo. Since no Indian cultural troupe is complete without women dancers, we have not allowed such troupes. But send us as many musicians as you like; any amount of instrumental music; any number of poets and writers. Just because of a certain restriction in a specific field of entertainment, people have drawn wrong conclusions, I am afraid.

Q : Mr. President, in a few statements and articles, here, the difference in perception between the Governments of India and Pakistan on the Afghanistan situation has been pointed out and underlined. In that context, a question which is usually raised in India is that the supply of arms to Afghan rebels and refugees, who are in Pakistan, is likely to build up tensions between Pakistan and Soviet Union; and how do you see the prospects of Pakistan's relations with Soviet Union?

A : Who says the Afghan refugees in Pakistan are being armed? This is wholly false. We have 2.1 million refugees on Pakistan soil who are being looked after by us on humanitarian grounds only. Pakistan has refused to act as a conduit for any arms supplies to Afghan freedom-fighters. Pakistan is not indulging in any act of interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, in spite of the fact that we don't recog-

nise the present regime there. But our sympathies are certainly with the freedom-fighters who, for your information, are engaged in insurgency inside Afghanistan. The 2.1 million refugees on Pakistani soil have nothing to do with the insurgency. If they were able to go across and fight, by now the whole of Afghanistan would have been ablaze. It is the people inside Afghanistan who, despite the lack of resources, are carrying on the struggle. You, of course, know that I made an offer to our friends in the Soviet Union, to seal the borders with their troops if they didn't want anyone to cross into Afghanistan. They said that, instead: we should lock up the refugee leaders in our prisons, and put our forces along the borders to ensure nobody entered Afghanistan. I told them that they would have to give me military assistance to raise a new army for this purpose!

Q : Is the United States trying to fight a proxy war?

A : Now, this is a totally wrong assumption. Remember, Pakistan is a non-aligned country.

Q : That is why the feeling in India is that these two positions are incompatible – you are a non-aligned country and this arms race being brought right into Pakistan....

A : Is India, which is receiving arms from the Soviets and has a treaty of friendship with them, serving as their jumping point for Vietnam? How do you expect, then, Pakistan, which is as non-aligned a country as India, and as sincere to the non-aligned movement as India, to serve as a jumping point for the United

States of America?

Q: Mr. President, the Simla Agreement comes up again and again in discussions between India and Pakistan. It has been said, lately, that the spirit of Simla Agreement has weakened. Who is responsible for that?

A: On the contrary, I think it has been strengthened. From my point of view, the Simla Agreement provides a very strong base on which to build our relations. The only weak spot in it is that it has not been able to solve the Kashmir problem as yet, although this issue is very much included in the Simla Agreement. We hope one day we'll be able to talk things over on the Kashmir issue as well.

Q: Are you talking about it in the present round of discussions?

A: I have not had a meeting with Mr. Narsimha Rao as yet, and I don't think our side has raised this issue so far.

Q: Sir, what have Agha Shahi and Narsimha Rao talked about during their round of discussions so far?

A: Well, I can tell you that both sides have had very fruitful discussions, and the talks have gone on as successfully as they ought to have. There has been a very good meeting of minds, and free and frank exchange of views. And I think this will pave the way for further strengthening of relationship.

Q : Do you think that there has been a consensus between the two countries on critical issues, such as Afghanistan, or have their views been different?

A : We are trying to open up the way for a consensus. We feel that, perhaps, India can be a little more vocal on the Afghanistan issue, which it has not been so far.

Q : One of the arguments given by Pakistan for getting the arms from the U.S. is that there is a possibility – perhaps Mr. Agha Shahi said this in his recent press interview – of some sort of a limited threat from the Soviet side. Is there a basis for that sort of apprehension?

A : You see, all countries try to look after their geographical boundaries, that is, to safeguard their borders. Pakistan, today, has no threat from the north or south-west, because we have a very friendly country in the north, which is China, and we have close brotherly relations with Iran, which is in the South-West. We have practically no troops facing each other on these borders. Between India and Pakistan, we have large forces on both sides facing each other. With the events that have taken place in Afghanistan, and with 80,000 Russian troops there, we have got to safeguard our security on the western borders. So, you may call it that much of a threat, if you like.

Q : So, with this type of sentiment and reference to large number of forces of India and Pakistan facing each other, and in the context of American arms flowing into Pakistan, there are grounds for some misapprehensions.

A : It all depends on the size and quantum of arms. It can be safely assumed that there can be no threat to any country from the type and quantity of arms that Pakistan is acquiring to supplement its defensive requirements. Pakistan has no intention of aggressing into any territory; it only wants to defend its own security and its own integrity.

Q : Mr. President, in view of the fact that Pakistan has no aggressive intentions, we would very much like to know what is the philosophy behind making the atomic bomb?

A : Who says that we are making a bomb? Even you have been taken for a ride by the Western propaganda.

Q : Sir, I also mentioned, you denied this.

A : You see, there is a difference between acquiring a technology, and in converting that technology for military purposes. As India would know from experience, a lot of effort is required in converting a technology into a weapon for military purposes. We are in the process of an experiment – mind you, a very modest experiment – by which we are trying to acquire nuclear technology which can be used for peaceful purposes.

Q : What Mr. President, is the present status of this development. For instance, there is a talk of uranium enrichment plant. Has it reached a point where you can make it?

A : Yes, that is true. We are trying to enrich uranium

through centrifugal method, which is only known to four or five countries in the world; and, if we can perfect that technology, then it can give us the capability of running breeder reactors, or the reactors which do not utilize pure uranium. But it does not give us a bomb !

Interviewer : Sir, India is making breeder reactors, as well as other reactors, without enriched uranium.

President : Yes, the reactor that you have, we also have a similar type; it does not require enriched uranium; it requires pure uranium; and we are using that. The future reactors are better run with enriched uranium; one can run them with plutonium, but they do not give one a bomb.

MICHAEL CHARLTON

Michael Charlton, who has been working for the British Broadcasting Corporation for more than ten years, interviewed the President of Pakistan as a correspondent of the B.B.C. on 24 June 1981.

He has also interviewed many other leaders of Asia, Europe and America.

INTERVIEW TO MICHAEL CHARLTON BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

21-6-1981

Interviewer : President Zia! Its now eighteen months since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan – an event which you must have turned over in your mind a great deal, and about which you must by now have some settled conclusions. On what assumptions do you feel you must proceed now, as far as Pakistan is concerned ?

President : Yes; eighteen months ago, Afghanistan – a non-aligned, Islamic, sovereign state – was overrun by some eighty thousand Soviet troops. It seems that even in this 20th century 'might is right'. But this is what should not be allowed to happen. My firm conviction about this whole affair is, first, that a nation must stand on its own feet. Unfortunately, towards the later stages of President Daud's rule, as he himself stated, Afghanistan had started leaning too heavily on the Soviet Union. Secondly, that it is a nation's own internal stability, its internal strength, that gives it external guarantee. If a nation is united; if it stands on its own feet; if it is determined to pay the price of sacrifice for its freedom, it just can't be browbeaten.

Q : How well are the Russians doing in your view ? One of your people told me here, the other day, that it is not just the airfields that they are building; they are building clubs, too, just like the British did. It seems to imply a very strong belief of the Russians for an

indefinite stay in Afghanistan. Isn't that your view?

A : Yes; this is my very considered view. The theory that the Russians were invited by their allies in Afghanistan has been contradicted each time there was a change of allies. I think the Soviets are likely to stay for a long time to come.

Q : Can we be sure about how you look at what the Russians have done? For example, throughout the last century, the British took the view that as they consolidated their control in India and extended their original foothold, the Russians embarked upon a career of conquest, which eventually absorbed the great Muslim dominions of Central Asia. The British were determined to halt that process on the northern frontiers of Afghanistan. And we have the word for it of Lord Roberts, the then British Commander-in-Chief in India, that the cause of the two Afghan Wars, which Britain fought in the last century, essentially was the presence of the Russian officers at Kabul, Afghanistan's capital. Now do you see what the Russians have done in the same perspective, as the resumption or the continuation of that old ambition to move southwards?

A : When I last talked to a very close friend of mine and Afghan watcher, I was told that the will of the famous Peter the Great was a false document. Nevertheless, it has been proved that the ambitions of Czarist Russia and Soviet Russia are the same. However, I am constrained to say that the Soviets have not learnt the lesson from the British. They are trying, in this 20th century to instal another Shah

Shuja – the puppet ruler that the British had placed on the Afghan throne, in the middle of the 19th century – with disastrous results. It is the defiant Afghan people, with their fiercely independent character which, in my opinion, is not allowing the Soviets to settle down.

Q : But you are pushing the problem back to Afghanistan. I was interested in how do you think it now affects you? The British and the Russians followed throughout the last century a kind of a patent policy. Each time one of them moved and tried to hold on to the territory that it had won, it would encounter from the other aggressive provocations, as they were called, which would compel it in time to advance its frontiers again. Now do you see any similarity ?

A : If you look at the steady Soviet expansion from the 19th century to the 20th century, you can't come to any other conclusion than that the Soviet expansionist policy has not changed.

Q : The British believed, of course, that they had – as a most highly placed official of the British Foreign Office said – a silent weapon which they could use by instigating anti-Russian feelings among the Muslim populations of Central Asia, far more effectively than anything the Russians could use on the sub-continent of India. How strong are the feelings aroused today, would you say? What is the potential for the world encouragement of such feelings, for example, to build up Afghan resistance ? Is there still a residual truth in what the British thought in the last century ?

A : Well, I cannot say with any certainty about the state of religious feelings in the Central Asia, because today Tashkent, Samarkand, Bokhara – they have all been absorbed as the southern states of the Soviet Union. But I can say with confidence that it is not very easy for the Soviets to face the defiant Afghans. I think the Afghans will fight till the last, not only for the sake of the freedom of their country, but also to uphold their beliefs and their faith in Islam.

Q : And, therefore, the initiative is not only with the Russians ? Is this what you say ?

A : The Russians are trying their best; but I think, the Afghans are giving them a tough time.

Q : What then is the choice the Russians have, if they do elect to stay in Afghanistan ?

A : They have to be either more ruthless, which they are trying to be, or compromise with the Afghans. But the Afghans generally don't compromise on principles.

Q : Now you have two million Afghan refugees in Pakistan at the moment roughly. One of the predictions is that you are expecting, forecasting perhaps, three million refugees.

A : Quite possible.

Q : Which could only be the consequence really if the Afghan army continued to crumble away, and the Russians had to take over more of the fighting. Is that

your prediction in Afghanistan?

A : Yes; I feel that the Russians would not stop short of ensuring that their writ runs in the whole of Afghanistan. That would lead to more ruthless action, and draw further retaliation from the Afghans; and, in turn, there would be more Afghan refugees inside Pakistan.

Q : That must directly affect you. What is the most likely threat that Pakistan now faces? For example, how vulnerable are you in Baluchistan – a territory neglected for two centuries, where you have great many political problems which still exist – demands for autonomy, dislike of Central Government?

A : I think it will be wrong to assume that Pakistan is vulnerable in such and such area, and not vulnerable in such and such area. Our policy has not been one of total confrontation with the Soviet Union. To a certain extent, it has also been of accommodation, because we can't ignore the fact that the Soviet Union, which is a super power, is now our next-door neighbour. We are now sharing the border with the Soviet Union; and with eighty thousand Soviet troops in Afghanistan, we can't take things lightly. It does not mean that we are giving in, or caving in, or buckling under the Russian pressure. No, it's not that. Pakistan, in my opinion, is strong and stable enough to be able to safeguard its integrity and security.

Q : But this Afghan resistance, which you appear to believe will strengthen, rather than weaken, in the end. Surely, the attitude of Pakistan is crucial to it.

Your support, or lack of it, would you agree, is the key to the military effectiveness of Afghan resistance?

A: You are absolutely right. But, at the same time, if Pakistan involves itself directly in this affair, then its security will also be in danger which, in turn, will have an adverse effect on the Afghan resistance. While we are one hundred per cent behind our brothers in Afghanistan, we are confining ourselves to giving shelter to 2.1 million refugees on humanitarian grounds; and we are not, and have no intention of, interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Q: But how can you maintain that position? One appreciates your unwillingness to give unnecessary provocation to the Soviet Union, but is not this position equally pressing upon you to become more involved? The Chinese Prime Minister, who was here a few days ago, said that the settlement of the Afghan problem depended mainly on the development of the Afghan people's resistance movement. How much are you in accord with that?

A: I totally agree with him. But Pakistan cannot afford to get involved in their resistance movement.

Q: Have you found that the United States has shown that it is aware of the strategic value of assistance to the Afghan resistance?

A: Yes, the new Administration has shown greater awareness, in this respect, than the previous one.

Q : And, in the absence of any progress towards a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan – or the Russians step up their military pressure there – do you not think it inevitable that more will be done to assist the Afghan resistance?

A : Yes. At the same time, we must realise that it is a problem that has got to be solved politically. It can't be solved militarily, because, to solve it militarily, somebody has got to face the Soviet Union. Pakistan is certainly not in a position to do that. This is point number one. The second point, which is more important, is that to support the Afghan freedom-fighters inside Afghanistan, assistance has got to come from outside. Now, from outside, there are only three sources available: from China, which is bordering Afghanistan in the north-east, or from Pakistan, which has the maximum number of avenues to Afghanistan, or from Iran, which stretches along Afghanistan's western border. These are the three avenues available, of which the most important, practical, and convenient is Pakistan. But Pakistan can't afford to be used as a conduit until and unless it is strengthened. And, in order to strengthen Pakistan sufficiently a lot of military hardware is required, which may or may not be acceptable, at the present moment, to either our friends outside Pakistan, or even to the people of Pakistan themselves.

Q : But do you think that if the Afghan resistance were capable of inflicting more losses on the Russians, they may induce them to take a different path and to look for possibility of some reconciliation ?

A : Yes, it is quite possible. But so far the Afghan freedom-fighters have been fighting in Afghanistan virtually with their bare hands. Now, you can't expect Pakistan to give them rifles, because we do not have enough even for ourselves. It has taken eighteen months, Mr. Charlton, eighteen months for the realisation to dawn on the West. I won't say this about Great Britain. Right from very beginning, we have had all the moral and political support from your Government, for which we are highly obliged.

Q : You mentioned you thought there was still something to talk to the Russians about and you were exploring such a possibility in January. Many thought that you were interested, then, in the possibility of a compromise but, perhaps, the hijacking to Kabul, the implication in it of Mr. Bhutto's son, and the critical behaviour of the Russians in this incident, changed your mind and pushed you towards the Americans.

A : No, not in the least. We had the option of compromising with the Soviet Union, but......

Q : But you decided against that.

A : Yes, of course. You would recall my very opening remarks were that if, today, in the 20th century, we let a big power occupy a small power – in other words, we concede that might is right – then we might as well give up. No, we must not let this happen. It is common knowledge that even the Soviet Union is conscious of world opinion. And in the last eighteen months, if we have been able to awaken the conscience of the world, particularly of the free coun-

tries in the West, then the Soviet Union may be made to feel the pinch of having done something wrong.

Q : What is it that you have agreed with the Americans – the best way to create a suitable military deterrent to the Russians, one that will take account of the special interests of Pakistan, which now has a common frontier with the Soviet Union?

A : A little while ago, I talked of my conviction that one must have internal security, one must have faith; one must stand on one's own feet. Once these basics are assured, one may add another component to them, and that is the minimum defensive deterrent. Now, it is to achieve this minimum deterrent that we have responded to the United States offer which, under the current circumstances, Mr. Charlton, is much more credible and much more durable.

Q : Sir, what constitutes the minimum defensive deterrent in new circumstances?

A : Most of Pakistan's military equipment is of U.S. origin. We have been able to acquire reasonably good military hardware from our Chinese friends, and some of our equipment is from France. So, what we are acquiring from the United States through a military sales relationship, are the most essential items required for our defence, keeping in view that the weapons we have today are generally obsolescent.

Q : The arms agreement implies to me, perhaps, that you and the Americans have come to the conclusion that the internal disorder in Iran, heightened by the

apparent downfall of Mr. Bani Sadr, will add to the security risk of the Gulf and your own country: and this has almost forced President Reagan to acknowledge the need for providing arms to you.

A : I am afraid this is a far-fetched conclusion, Mr. Charlton! In this military arms sales relationship with the United States of America, there are no strings attached, no preconditions, and practically no reciprocity.

Q : Am I wrong about Iran?

A : Totally wrong. We have not even discussed Iran and mind you.......

Q : But you could agree with the proposition that Iran's troubles are likely to continue to afford opportunities to the Russians which have not existed up to now?

A : Yes, that is a different story. Not as associates of the United States of America, but on our own, we will do everything that is possible to help and strengthen Iran. Of course, I am not referring to the Iran-Iraq war, in which we are neutral. Other than this, Pakistan stands totally committed to Iran for all the help and assistance we can offer.

Q : But what is it about Iran to which you stand committed?

A : Iran today is going through a very complex situation. Iran, Mr. Charlton, as you know better than me, has undergone a revolution, and revolutions take time to

settle down. In my opinion, Iran has not yet reached the conclusive stage of the revolution; and that is why it is having those eruptions. But it has an elected President, who has currently having a difficult time.

Q : A massive understatement! By the time we hear you actually broadcast it, he would no longer be the President.

A : But the fact is that he is an elected President.

Q : When it comes to actually implementing this American aid programme, you have, if I may suggest, two problems — the American public opinion, and the American Congress. Now, the President is able to waive the provisions which prevent him from giving aid to a country that is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; he has that power if he considers it to be in the national interest. I would like your views about how you see this raid by Israel on the Iraqi reactor, highlighting the whole issue of non-proliferation. What effect do you think it is likely to have on Pakistan's nuclear endeavours?

A : In one small sentence: Pakistan has joined whole-heartedly the rest of the nations of the world in condemning this outright aggression. This is something totally against the norms of international behaviour in which Israel has indulged by bombing Iraq's nuclear reactor. By now, as you must have heard, the Security Council has condemned it, and so has Pakistan. But it has nothing to do with Pakistan's efforts to acquire nuclear technology. Ours is a modest, peaceful programme, aimed at meeting the

energy requirements of Pakistan. And Pakistan is determined to acquire this nuclear technology.

Q : That may be so; but, as for the arms agreement with the Americans, have you been made aware by them of any particular concern or obstacle that the nuclear programme may present in getting it through the Congress ?

A : This point has not become an impediment in our talks. Furthermore, you must have heard that the United States Administration is taking steps to modify the Symington Amendment. Although it is their problem, I am confident that they will be able to overcome the hurdles if there are any.

Q : But you, probably, also saw that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has added what appears to be a rider. While acknowledging that the President can waive the Symington Amendment, the Committee has recommended that the President should not use his powers to circumvent the Amendment, if such a country detonates a nuclear explosive device. Do you intend to test the device ?

A : What device ?

Q : Well, I am asking because there is a widespread belief that you intend to reach that capability. Do you intend to have a nuclear test ?

A : We do not have the capability, nor are we trying for that capability. We do not want to, nor are we going to, explode a device. We are only working on a

modest nuclear programme in order to fill our energy gap.

Q : Do you intend to put yourself in a position where you could have one if circumstances forced you to do so?

A : You know, Pakistan's policy in the last three years has been categorical. We are against nuclear proliferation; we are for a nuclear-free zone in the Indian Ocean; we have agreed to sign all international guarantees provided Pakistan is not discriminated against; and we are prepared to accept conditions for safeguards if they are also imposed on other countries, and not only on Pakistan.

Q : And can I suggest that pressure may grow on you from another direction? As you are an Islamic nation and member of Islamic group, some of them may feel that you have an obligation to carry on and acquire this capability, Iraq's having been destroyed.

A : No, Pakistan and Iraq have not collaborated in this matter. I am not even aware of Iraq's programme. There is no such thing as Islamic bomb. Pakistan's is a very modest programme; and it is not collaborating with any country, nor is it under any obligation to pass on to a third country whatever it acquires in nuclear technology.

Q : The recent meeting between the Pakistan Foreign Minister and the Indian Foreign Minister here, whom you saw yourself. On the face of it, India and Pakistan would appear to have a common threat from

Soviet presence in Afghanistan. How much common awareness of that is there now between the two countries?

A : During our discussions, this awareness has been fairly well conveyed by our visitor from across the border, Mr. Narsimha Rao. The Indians agree with us that what has happened in Afghanistan is not right. But they do not agree to shouting as loudly as we have been doing. They believe that perhaps persuasion would be more helpful. However, their perception is the same. From what we heard from the Indian Foreign Minister, it appears that India has accepted the principle that every country has a right to acquire the essential weaponry for self-defence. This has been the most welcome comment of our friend from across the border.

Q : You spoke, when the Foreign Minister was here, of the need for a physical gesture by India to improve relations. What did you have in mind?

A : Oh, lots of things. India is a bigger country. And, as I told the Indian correspondents and Mr. Narsimha Rao, Pakistan is not in competition with India. Nevertheless, Pakistan expects to be treated on equal terms as a free, independent and sovereign country.

Q : I was really wondering how confident you are on accommodation being reached with India, which will allow Pakistan to reverse the priority that she is giving to her internal frontier with India, and increase the deterrent defence, you have spoken about, on the North-West Frontier, by taking Divisions away from

Kashmir. Where bulk of the Pakistan Army has been for over thirty years. Have you reached that sort of accommodation with India?

A : Not yet; but we are prepared to and the Simla Agreement, which was signed much before I came on the scene, actually calls for settlement of problems between the two countries without the use of force. Personally, I am of the opinion that, given the goodwill currently prevailing in both the countries, India and Pakistan would be able to live in harmony with each other.

Q : There has been so much agonising talk about the gulf between India and Pakistan being so wide, as a consequence of three wars, that you are becoming involved in other relationships, particularly those around the Gulf from where a great deal of your income comes, or where Pakistanis are working. So, do you think that the Russian invasion of Afghanistan has had the effect of returning Pakistan and India together to some perception of a common destiny?

A : With India, you mean? Even before the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, there has been the awareness of commonality of interests. But, Pakistan being an Islamic state, has always pursued the policy of forging close associations with the Islamic countries, among whom the Gulf states are also physically nearer to us. Now, turning to India, we can't forget the realities of history and geography. India is our neighbour and, at one stage, India and Pakistan were one country. Although Pakistan was created on the fundamental principle of two nations, we have a

lot of things in common; and, I think, we ought to build on these in order to gain the maximum from each other's strength, and to cover each other's weakness. I think, in that respect, we have to go a long way to create that much of credibility and confidence between the two countries.

Q : Now, earlier this year, your downfall – your departure – was being very widely forecast until the hijacking of the aircraft occurred, and the corner was turned. How vulnerable do you think, or prepared to concede, your position was?

A : Mr. Charlton, I have always said that I have no inhibitions about my own status. I am not an elected leader of Pakistan. I assumed power under certain peculiar circumstances with definite aims and objectives in mind. Since then, three times I have tried to hand over power, but have not succeeded. These aims and objectives, I will, *Insha' Allah*, fulfil before I hand over. And it is my earnest desire to find ways and means of a peaceful transfer of power from the military to the people's representatives. Mark you, I have not used the word "elected representatives", because I am looking for a system of government and people's participation which is based on Islamic concepts and traditions. As regards my being vulnerable at one time and not so vulnerable at another, I think, there has been no change in my position. In a few days time, I would complete four years in office. If I, or my colleagues or the Government did not enjoy the confidence of the people, we would have been in the streets by now. You ought to know Pakistanis better; once they lose confidence in a

leader whether an elected one or a non-elected one, they don't take too long to decide whether the man should remain in office or should be thrown out .

Q : If I can repeat my question. When you look back and assess your position, would you acknowledge that a lot of informed people were thinking you were in very deep trouble before this hijacking took place and then, after it was over, you managed to turn the whole affair to a great apparent advantage. Are you prepared to concede that you were in trouble ?

A : No, not at all. But I am prepared to say this much, which is a fact, that after the hijacking, because of the exposure of some of the political elements in Pakistan, the stock of the present government went up, because the statements that we have been making, and the policies we have been following were fully substantiated by this act of violence and terrorism, associated with a particular political party.

Q : You said to me earlier that Pakistan has suffered for its freedom and its causes. I was going to suggest to you almost the opposite; that it had independence handed to it on a plate, and it didn't suffer for that. And its not sure it is willing to suffer really for a political cause. Otherwise, I suggest to you that crowds may have stormed the jail and released Mr. Bhutto, had that been the case. But I am interested in your own judgement as to why political opposition here has, I wouldn't say, crumbled, but faded away, and that your position is obviously, by general agreement, quite strong.

A : Mr. Charlton, I owe my position to my conviction, which is shared by 84 million Pakistanis, about the basic ideology of Pakistan being Islam, and on which I have stood firmly. It is my effort to return Pakistan to its Islamic ideology which, I think, has had a very profound effect on the minds of the people in general; and that is my humble contribution in the service of Pakistan.

Q : You, have established, or are in the process of establishing, Islamic courts in the country. Is it your intention that English jurisprudence is to go in Pakistan eventually ?

A : The English jurisprudence we inherited has been very effectively utilised in the sub-continent for over hundred and fifty years. It is not my intention to wipe it off altogether. Some of the elements of English jurisprudence are very effective and quite suitable to our conditions. We are getting rid of those elements which are repugnant to Islam, and we are bringing in laws and institutions for dispensation of justice based on Islamic jurisprudence.

Q : You said yourself, you have been in the job four years now. It seems to me that you have, if I may say so, grown in confidence since I saw you last, and you are rather enjoying it. It doesn't appear to me to be the stance of a man who is thinking imminently of laying down power.

A : Well, first accept my compliments on the compliment you have paid me about my having grown in confidence. Basically, I am a man who has a great belief

in destiny, not my own, but the destiny of my nation. I am a very ordinary person. Whatever I have been able to achieve is due to the blessings of God and, perhaps the prayers of my mother, my wife and my countrymen. You may not believe in it, but I have a very firm faith in this.

Q : But you have to answer honourably to yourself. When are you going to come down the mountain into the political arena?

President : It is my sincere effort to find ways and means of a peaceful transfer of power from the military to the civilian representatives. Once I have found the answer, and am convinced that this will bring in some positive results towards the stability of Pakistan, and will pave the way for the peaceful transfer of power, I will be the first person, at that moment, to say "Thank you", and will shake hands with my successor, and say, "Here it is: take it; and God bless you."

Interviewer : Thank you, Mr. President.

ALVIN WEBB

Alvin Webb, as a Chief correspondent for Middle East and Asia of "U.S. News and World Report" – a weekly published from Washington, visited Pakistan in August 1981 and interviewed the President. His wide-ranging interview with the President was published by the weekly in it issue of 21 September 1981.

Webb joined "U.S. News and World Report" in January 1981. He had also worked for United Press International for about 20 years.

INTERVIEW TO
ALVIN WEBB
US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT

27-8-1981

Interviewer: What kind of relationship do you see ahead between Pakistan and the United States – an alliance, or informal partnership, or what?

President: I think, the term alliance is no longer valid in our context. Having once been member of CENTO and SEATO, we learnt from experience that we would be better off without such alliances. We are now a non-aligned nation, pursuing an independent foreign policy. We are, of course, part of what may be called an Islamic bloc, by virtue of our culture and faith. The relationship that we are pursuing with the United States is based on reciprocity of interests, and mutual respect and trust.

Q: Do you envisage use of American military bases in Pakistan?

A: No, not at all. In fact, the question of American bases has not even been raised in our talks with our American friends so far.

Q: What do you need from Washington to deal with dangers that you see Pakistan is facing? What sort of help are you looking for from the United States in this regard, and how soon would you need or expect such aid?

A : I would say that, in the political field, we need moral support from the United States. In the material field, we need some assistance to build our economic base, and we also want to avail ourselves of the facility to purchase some military equipment. To the part of your question as to how soon we expect such aid, I would say that we would like to take a deeper look into our own requirements and how far the United States would be prepared to meet them. We have, so far, indicated to them that we would like to have F-16 on a priority basis.

Q : The initial promise of F-16, I believe the Americans made, was for delivery within a year, and now they are saying it is going to be in two years. Is this unsatisfactory....?

A : No; there was no firm commitment by the United States as to how many and how soon they would deliver the F-16. In principle, they accepted the necessity of providing the Pakistan Air Force with the latest aircraft of which F-16 was proposed by us. The only aspect under discussion at present is how soon the PAF can absorb these aircraft.

Q : What role do you expect Pakistan to play in underpinning the security of the Persian Gulf region?

A : We feel that a strong and stable Pakistan by itself is a guarantee of peace and stability in the region. It does not have to contribute physically to the security of the Gulf countries, or to their internal stability. That is the responsibility of the Gulf countries themselves, and, for this purpose, they have constituted their own

Council. Pakistan respects their stand that the defence of the Gulf region is entirely their responsibility. Of course, Pakistan forms the backyard to the Gulf, and you cannot keep your backyard exposed.

Q : What frontline troops Pakistan is providing to the countries like Saudi Arabia?

A : None at all! This is a gross exaggeration.

Q : You see, this has created a lot of confusion.

A : To be very frank, this confusion has been created intentionally. It is a very deliberate attempt to malign Pakistan, to create doubts in the minds of other countries. With Saudi Arabia, we have a special relationship as a brotherly Muslim country; we have agreements of various types – economic, political, cultural, and so on. We have also been providing to Saudi Arabia a number of instructors and some technicians from the three services – the Army, the Air Force and the Navy. There is no such thing as what you call "frontline troops" from Pakistan, either guarding the frontiers of Saudi Arabia, or forming a part of the Saudi Armed Forces. The Saudis never asked us for the troops, we never offered them any. Pakistan has never played the role of mercenaries; but, if ever the services of our troops were required by the Saudi Government and the people, as I have said often before, I would be the first to lead them – such is the attachment we have, as Muslims, for the Holy Land.

Q : Does your interest in collaborating with other Muslim countries lay the basis for a kind of Islamic alliance, formal or informal, for defence of the Persian Gulf area?

A : There is no such thing as an alliance among Muslim countries, like NATO or Warsaw Pact. There is, however, a sense of belonging to an Islamic bloc, or Islamic *Ummah,* that transcends physical barriers between Muslim nations. Anybody believing in the Islamic faith, whether he is living on the North Pole or the South Pole, in Pakistan or the United States of America, belongs to one community. So, from that point of view, the Islamic countries throughout the world consider themselves as a single entity.

In contemporary terminology, an alliance implies a military or an economic compact or both. The Muslim countries, today, do not have either the military or the economic resources to form into an alliance. However, they have all got together and constituted the Organisation of Islamic Conference for closer collaboration among themselves in promoting and safeguarding their interests, and deliberating upon international issues.

Q : What about collaboration with China? How important is that today in Pakistan's foreign policy? Does it offer any sort of hedge against the Soviet threat?

A : The relationship between Pakistan and China is of vital importance. It is the cornerstone of our foreign policy, and is based on principles: on mutual respect and trust. In fact, we regard it so highly that I can

speak for a long time on this subject. We have been associated with China for the last twenty years, but had never envisaged a threat to the extent that now appears to be from the west. However, I know this much that if ever Pakistan's security is threatened, from the west or the east, China will not stand idly by.

Q : How great a threat, in your view, do the Soviets pose to Pakistan as a result of their military occupation of Afghanistan? How serious are the reported Soviet incursions into Pakistani airspace?

A : A definite qualitative change has occurred on our North-West Frontier, along our western borders. With the occupation of a non-aligned, Muslim neighbour by eighty to ninety thousand troops of a super power, Pakistan has every reason to feel threatened. But we will not be deflected from our principled stand on the Afghanistan issue.

Q : There have been Soviet air incursions across the borders. How serious are these?

A : There were a large number of air violations, particularly last year. We have not had so many since April this year.

Q : If the guerilla warfare against the Soviets continues in Afghanistan, are you fearful of Soviet military action against Pakistan in an effort to close the border?

A : We have tried to tell the Soviets that the guerilla warfare in Afghanistan is the natural reaction of the

Afghans to foreign interference, and that we have no hand in it. This is not the first time that there has been attempts at foreign intervention in Afghanistan. Three times, the British tried in the past and failed; the Czarist Russia fared no better. The Afghans are a fiercely independent people, and, come what may, they will fight to the last for their country's freedom, their honour, and their Islamic faith. The insurgency is from within Afghanistan. It is a misconception that its source is in Pakistan. Meanwhile, the direct effect of this insurgency has been an influx of 2.4 million Afghan refugees into Pakistan. If the Russians persist in their mistaken belief that Pakistan is trying to help the Afghan freedom-fighters then they may cross our borders in the form of hot pursuit, or by way of punishing us for our alleged actions. I have suggested to the Soviets to seal the borders if they can, and see whether the insurgency will stop. The only way to stop the insurgency is to give the people of Afghanistan a government which is legitimate, which is in accordance with their own wishes and aspirations – and that certainly is not the same as Mr. Babrak Karmal's!

Q : What policy should the non-Communist world pursue towards the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan – help the freedom fighters in an effort to force the Soviets out?

A : Short of a direct confrontation with a Super Power, there is no military solution to the problem, and that is out of the question. So a political solution – a negotiated solution – has to be sought and pursued. For that, I think, the freedom-fighters must get full

moral and political support, not only from the Islamic countries, but also from the countries of the West. The pressure of world opinion must be brought to bear upon the Russians. In other words, the issue must be kept alive; it must keep on appearing on the front pages of all the newspapers in the free world. It is also the responsibility of the free world to ensure that the 2.4 million Afghan refugees are not allowed to die of hunger or disease. For its part, Pakistan is looking after them to the best of its ability, on humanitarian grounds, and as a duty to our Muslim brethren.

Q : You have done a marvellous job.

A : It is with the assistance of friends, such as the United States, the United Nations, the ICRC, the Muslim countries – they have all put in (assistance), and we are grateful to them.

Q : In recent years, relations between Pakistan and the United States were severely strained by allegations that you are secretly preparing to produce nuclear weapons. Do you intend to produce nuclear weapons?

A : No! I have been claiming from the housetops that Pakistan will neither procure, nor produce a nuclear bomb; but Pakistan will never give up its right to acquire nuclear technology. We are a developing country, we are short of sources of energy required to exist and also to progress. This year we have spent 35 per cent of our hard-earned foreign exchange earnings only on the import of oil to meet our energy requirements. We need to save every penny just to be able to

provide even such basic necessities of life to our people as drinking water. What to speak of hospital facilities, we can't supply aspirin for their headache. In the circumstances, the only viable alternative source of energy for us is nuclear. We are, therefore, seeking to acquire (technology) – not for producing a bomb, but for peaceful purposes.

Q : Is this the reason that you refuse to subscribe to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and allow international inspection of your facilities?

A : It is because we refuse to accept discriminatory treatment. Why pick on Pakistan alone? Why not ask South Africa, Israel, India, and other countries to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? Recently, Pakistan has co-sponsored two resolutions in the United Nations: one, declaring South-East Asia as a nuclear-free zone; and, two, giving international security guarantees to countries who do not possess nuclear weapon technology. If we were producing or wanting to produce a bomb, we should have been the last to sponsor these resolutions. The Karachi Nuclear Power Plant – KANUPP – is under international safeguards, and we have provided all facilities for its inspection.

Q : In view of the Israeli attack on Iraq's nuclear installation, are you worried about the possibility of an Indian strike to destroy your nuclear facilities if there are continuing suspicions about your activities in this field?

A : We hope the Indians are more civilised than the

Israelis! This Israeli attack on Iraq's nuclear plant is broad daylight piracy. Its acceptance by the free world is even a greater crime. We have allowed a criminal to get away with murder. The day Israel attacked Iraq's plant the Indian Foreign Minister was visiting Pakistan. We exchanged ideas on the subject, and he described it as an unforgivable act. We hope he meant what he said.

Q : I hope you are right!

A : I hope so!

Q : Looking at your domestic problems: how do you respond to some outside criticism that your Government is unstable, and may suffer the same fate as the Shah of Iran?

President : To the outsiders, particularly to democratic countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, it would be an enigma if the military regime in Pakistan did not face domestic problems. But, viewed from inside, against the background of the country's thirty-four years of turbulent political history, the present Government would be noted for its stability. The present regime has the support of a large majority of the people of Pakistan, and this has been demonstrated very recently, on the 14th of August, by the public response to a call from me personally to celebrate our Independence Day in a befitting manner. There was unprecedented enthusiasm of the people throughout the length and breadth of Pakistan, and they reaffirmed their faith in its Islamic ideology. It is the effort of this regime to consolidate the ideological

basis of the country. We are, meanwhile, trying to revive the democratic institutions. We have already held elections to Local Bodies on adult franchise basis, which constitute democracy at the grass-roots level; we have set up the Provincial Councils; and there is the Federal Council, composed of members from all over the country, which serves an advisory role in matters pertaining to Government policies and the affairs of the state. In course of time, when the environment is conducive, we will hold general elections. Our ultimate aim is a peaceful transfer of power from the military to the elected civilian representatives of the people of Pakistan.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

RODNEY TASKER

Rodney Tasker, who is the regional editor of the Far Eastern Economic Review, Hongkong was granted interview by the President of Pakistan on 1 October 1981.

The Review has a large crculation and considerable impact on its readerships including leaders of public opinion.

INTERVIEW TO RODNEY TASKER FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW

1-10-1981

Interviewer: The main questions I would like to ask you are on foreign policy, particularly the US aid package of 3.2 million dollars. Just how important is this to your country and why do you actually need to have this re-armament at this time?

President: We need to replace our obsolete equipment. We have some museum pieces, such as F-86s of the Korean War vintage and M-47 tanks of 1954 make. With what is happening around us, particularly on our western borders, with the Soviet intrusion in Afghanistan, Pakistan has to pay a little more attention to its security. We are grateful to the U.S. Administration that they have extended the facility to us to purchase reasonably good items of military hardware, some on cash payment, and the rest against the loan, on normal interest, advanced by them. In other words, this deal has no effect on our non-aligned independent status. The other part of the package consists of economic aid.

Q: So, you say the deal will not affect your relationship with the non-aligned and the Islamic world. Isn't there the danger that this would be seen as Pakistan coming close to the United States in its strategic contacts? Would you be seen by your neighbours as perhaps towing towards the United States?

A : No: I don't think so. Take India, for instance. It has a formal Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union from whom it has been acquiring enormous quantities of weaponry on very favourable terms, and yet it has retained its status as a founding-member of the Non-Aligned Movement. Nobody calls India a proxy of the Soviet Union. I see no justification for somebody doubting Pakistan's non-aligned status merely because it is buying some military hardware from the United States at world market rates. In my opinion, Pakistan's renewed relationship with the United States cannot possibly affect its membership of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

Q : You have, in fact, provoked a good deal of comments from New Delhi, including that from Mrs. Gandhi, pertaining to what is seen to be a threat. Do you think it is justified?

A : I personally feel it is absolutely unjustified. I would invite your attention to the recent Congressional hearings in the United States of America, during which most of the speakers, whether for or against Pakistan, were at least agreed that the modest military aid package to Pakistan constituted no threat whatsoever to India. It is common knowledge that, over the years, India has acquired 1.6 billion dollars worth of sophisticated weapons, aircraft, tanks, ground-to-air missiles, air-to-air missiles from the Soviet Union at concessional rates; that is, their market price would be something in the region of six to seven billion dollars. Now, we have never objected to this because we feel that it is the inherent right of

every sovereign state to determine its defence requirements and proceed to equip itself accordingly. You see, the aircraft that India is inducting, besides the two hundred Jaguars, are MIG 25 and MIG 27 which are, in certain respects, considered superior to F-16. India has, therefore, no justification to object to Pakistan getting a few F-16s.

Q : Can you have guess why there should be such criticism, particularly from Mrs. Gandhi?

A : Yes; it is political brinkmanship. There is no other logical explanation for such criticism. Over and over again, I have said from the housetops that we are not in competition with India, that India is a much bigger country with far greater resources than Pakistan, and that Pakistan wants to have good neighbourly relations with India. I told the Indian Foreign Minister Mr. Narsimha Rao, when he came here, that we were prepared to take the Indian Government into confidence, if they were interested in knowing what military hardware we were going to get from the United States. I said to Mr. Rao that this should convince them that we had no intention of using any of the hardware against India. If Mrs. Gandhi still persists in her criticism of Pakistan, then, with due deference to her age and experience, I am obliged to infer that she is not reconciled to the existence of even half of what is left of Pakistan after India, in collusion with the Soviet Union, dismembered it in 1971.

Q : Mrs. Gandhi has also stated, in one of her recent interviews, that she may be prepared to explode

another nuclear device. Does this cause concern to you?

A : No, it does not cause us any concern. It should be a matter of concern for those of our friends who have been trying to discriminate against Pakistan. Pakistan is experimenting with a modest programme for peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and we are being pressurised to the extent that we have to answer for every step that we take in this respect. Whereas nobody questions India, who does not accept any safeguards about its nuclear installations, who has already exploded an atom bomb in 1974, and who now threatens to have another explosion if Pakistan gets F-16s. I think India is just finding an excuse, perhaps, either to dissuade the United States from offering to sell arms to Pakistan, or to create a sense of insecurity in the region to make political capital, or to achieve both these objectives.

Q : Over the past year, yourself and Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Agha Shahi, have made several offers to India for talks on mutual non-aggression, on nuclear non-proliferation; there has'nt been any positive response from New Delhi. This is also disappointing. Would you like to say something?

A : Yes, it is disappointing in the sense that, despite our extending the hand of friendship; our sincere expression of desire to live like good neighbours; our assurance that we want to promote the spirit of the Simla Agreement of 1972; our offer of a non-aggression pact, non-use of arms; despite all this there has been no response so far from India. But I am a

person who always looks at the brighter side of the picture; I am an optimist by nature; and I still feel that, perhaps, we will have a breakthrough, and develop good relationship with India.

Q : Perhaps a summit meeting with Mrs. Gandhi? Would you welcome it?

A : Yes; if there is such an opportunity, I would jump at it. We are also now encouraging a regional approach to the problems of South Asia. In this respect, we are trying to promote cooperation among the countries of the region – Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives, India and Pakistan. I hope that, after the spadework has been done at the preliminary conferences, a summit meeting would be held among the countries of this region.

Q : Mrs. Indira Gandhi is opposing Pakistan's re-entry into the Commonwealth. Does that disappoint you? Have you had hopes of rejoining the Commonwealth?

A : We were members of the Commonwealth in our own right, but we decided to quit on our own. I will not comment on that action; but there was no precedent for such an action; hence the need for a consensus on whether Pakistan should be allowed re-entry. In 1977, when this issue came up, I believe all the Commonwealth members favoured it, except India. We can wait; we are in no hurry; we would like to re-join the Commonwealth provided our entry is with honour and dignity.

Q : Mr. President, Mrs.Thatcher is arriving here next

week. Can you say what specific talks would you have with her?

A : Britain and Pakistan have had excellent relations from the very beginning. Britain has gone beyond her somewhat reduced means to help Pakistan economically, technically, and in other fields, such as educational scholarships. And since what happened in Afghanistan, Britain has been forthright in condemning the Soviet action. We are very grateful to the British for this. They have also helped in keeping the Afghan problem alive by which I mean, focusing world attention on it through news-media and international forum. The British have been generous in their help to Afghan refugees in Pakistan. So, I think, we will take this opportunity of briefing Mrs. Thatcher on the magnitude of the Afghan refugee problem. We will show her one or two refugee camps. We will, of course, be discussing some bilateral issues, including that concerning the nearly quarter of a million Pakistanis working in Great Britain. Mrs. Thatcher's visit is very brief – she comes in the morning and leaves at night – but we hope to utilise the time available in exchanging views on a wide range of subjects, including the nature of threat to the region.

Q : The bilateral relations you are talking of, do these also include the supply of arms?

A : We have very few weapons of British origin left with us. If there is a possibility of buying some from Britain, then we will certainly like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to talk about it.

Q: Last month, Kabul issued this offer of talks on Afghan problem at a tripartite conference. Do you think this is well-intended, sincere offer of talks?

A: Initially, we thought that there would be some flexibility in Kabul's approach – and I said so in one of my public statements. That was after going through the Monitoring Reports of Kabul Radio. However, on a detailed study of the text of the 24th August proposal, we found that substantially it was not different from the 14th May proposal. It is the same old wine, in a somewhat different bottle. However, there is one noticeable difference. They are now prepared to talk with Pakistan multilaterally and indirectly under the auspices of the United Nations, in the presence of the Secretary-General or his representative. Previously, the Soviet Union was insisting on one-to-one – Pakistan and Afghanistan; Afghanistan and Iran – talks, and nothing else. On one issue there is still no agreement. They are insisting that the talks – whether bilateral, multilateral or indirect – will be regarded as those between the representative of the Afghan Government and those of the Pakistan and the Iranian Governments. We have refused to accept their representative – Foreign Minister Dost Mohammad – as representative of the Babrak Karmal regime, as we don't recognise that regime. This is not because of Zia-ul-Haq's susceptibilities to Babrak Karmal; but because we must adhere to the resolutions of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in which all the Islamic countries have unanimously said that the Babrak Karmal regime will not be recognised as long as the Soviet troops are in Afghanistan. So, we have offered to have talks with

Mr. Dost Mohammad in his capacity only as a political party member. We hope the talks under the auspices of the United Nations would be encouraging, and eventually lead to a political solution of the problem.

Q : Are you prepared to wait for this process to go on in the U.N.? It means years!

A : We realize it will take a long time; we are not looking for miracles, nor for quick results. But so long as the dialogue is on, for which the United Nations is the only effective channel available, there will be hope of achieving some results.

Q : Do you think that the Soviet Union wants to see a way out of it?

A : I would say yes and no. When I say yes, it is in view of the reports put out by the international news-media that the Soviets are suffering a large number of casualties in Afghanistan. There was a story in the London *Times* two days ago, carrying an interview with a captured Russian soldier who said that they were being brought to Afghanistan to fight the Chinese, but they discovered that, instead, they were being ordered to suppress the Afghans and face the Afghan freedom-fighters. When such reports and news of Soviet casualties reach Russian families who are affected, they are bound to ask the Soviet hierarchy as to whose battles they were fighting. Is it the battle for the survival of the Soviet Union? Is this the battle for the survival of Afghanistan, or of Babrak Karmal? When they find so many casualties going back to

Russia, and no let up either in the internal subversion, or in the attacks by freedom-fighters, then they may be looking for a face-saving device to get out of Afghanistan or to keep Afghanistan under their surveillance without the involvement of their troops, and without having to bear the reproach of the world.

I say no, because of our experience that every time there is a move on Afghanistan in the international field, whether through the Organisation of Islamic Conference, or the United Nations, or any other world forum, the Soviet Union starts adopting a flexible attitude, indicating a desire to find a solution. But, as soon as the international pressure lessens, the Soviets revert to their inflexible position, because they do not intend to pull out of Afghanistan.

For our part, while we will not give up our principled stand, we are avoiding direct physical confrontation with the Soviets. Besides being a Super Power, the Soviet Union happens now also to be a regional power, and we are in this very region. As the proverb goes, while living in the sea, one has got to live with the whales. I must, at the same time, add that the Soviets have indicated to us that they respect the frontiers of Pakistan, and its integrity as an independent, non-aligned Muslim State. I have no reasons to doubt the word of a Super Power unless proved otherwise. But I am also a military man, and in our training we don't go by intentions alone, but also by possibilities and capabilities. The Soviets today, with their troops currently inside Afghanistan, have the capability of launching, if not major, at least

hot-pursuit limited operations into Pakistan.

Q : You came as a military leader, and now some observers are saying you are a political leader. What is the extent of this Martial Law in Pakistan ?

A : Since I am dealing with political matters, I am a sort of a politician to that extent; this is not by choice, but by compulsion. I derive my strength not from politics, but from my constituency, that is, our armed forces. As to the degree of Martial Law, there is the least involvement of the military in the running of the day-to-day affairs of the country. It is the civilian agencies which are operative. Then there are the elected Local Bodies, at the grass-roots democratic level, which look after the development and other aspects of their respective areas.

Q : Do you see any day in the near-future that you will be able to lift the Martial Law ?

A : Yes, in not too distant a future; but not too soon either. We have gone over the hump since we took over when the country was on the brink of a civil war. I have twice attempted to hold elections, but there was too much polarisation, agitational politics, and too many vested interests. I had, therefore, to put a total clamp on political activity. But I have my routine discussions with defunct political leaders. I consult them; I consult the people; and I find there has been a marked improvement in the atmosphere; though there are still elements who are playing in the hands of those who want to create confusion in the country, through subversion, bomb blast here, and

assassination there. It will take a little more time before sanity returns to politics. In the meantime, we have been concentrating on the country's economic development, the economy is in a much better shape today. We have established institutions like Local Bodies in order to involve elected representatives of the people, at the grass-roots level, in the development process. Simultaneously, we have initiated the process of Islamisation in the country. We hope that we will also catch up politically in course of time.

Q : The Pakistan People's Party was the greatest opposition to your rule if there was a normal situation.

A : This is a fallacy. A political party can pose a threat as long as it draws its strength from the people. Today, the People's Party stands condemned. Those of its members who tried to stand for the Local Bodies elections in the name of the party were rejected by the people. Those who tried to carry out subversion were caught by the people, handed over to the police. The incident of hijacking of PIA's plane to Kabul by Murtaza Bhutto's henchmen has further antagonised the people against the PPP, as also the latest act of assassination of a politician in Karachi.

Q : You talked about Murtaza Bhutto and his group. Is there any special base in Kabul? Is there any evidence of any other foreign power?

A : Yes, we know on good authority who are behind all this. Besides Afghanistan, unfortunately, they also happen to be our neighbours. We even took up the matter at the diplomatic level with them; but they

denied any involvement. Surely, when a country harbours a party involved in hijacking or in subversion, it is an unfriendly act.

Q : Sir, your critics say about your Islamisation programme that you are using Islam as a political tool?

A : Now, let me tell you that our people are very sincere and very genuine, but they are also very perceptive. Once they see that they are being led up the garden path, they can tear you to bits. The people came out in the streets, and in just over a couple of weeks the so-called popularly elected regime was gone. I think, I could not be in the position I am today unless I had the support of the people of Pakistan. We have to see as to what do the people of Pakistan desire. In my very first public statement of 5th July 1977, on taking over, I said that Pakistan was created in the name of Islam, and that we would try to establish an Islamic order in the country. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The people have seen for themselves that in the last four years, we have been able to achieve much more towards the Islamisation of the state than in the last thirty years.

Q : How would you compare yourself to the system and the adoption of your programme on Islamisation with your neighbouring state in Iran?

A : There is a great difference in approach. In Iran, they have brought in the Islamisation process through a revolution, and all revolutions take time to settle. In Pakistan, we are proceeding to establish an Islamic order through an evolutionary process, which we

intend to follow quietly and steadily.

Q : It is said that because Pakistan is a great Muslim country with an Islamisation programme, therefore, it will never achieve a full democratic style in the western sense of the word. Is that so ?

A : No, Islam provides the most democratic institutional basis of society. I will read out this one paragraph for you. It talks about the society that was founded by the Prophet in Medina, and says. "The society assumes the form of the state as it did in the state of Medina, the theocratic, democratic welfare state; or a theo-democratic state comes into being. Defining a little more elaborately, it is the Government of God, through the rule of Divine Law, by the trustees of the mission of Islam, who function on the basis of their election by persons of character and wisdom amongst Muslims, and administer the state, within the limits prescribed by God, as servants of people for the attainment by the people of their comprehensive welfare."

Q : What is the book you are reading from ?

A : This is "The Quranic Foundation and Structure of Muslim Society" by Dr. Mohammad Fazalur Rehman Ansari, M.A., Ph.D.

Q : From the Western point of view, some of the punishments which have been adopted here, even though not been carried out, do seem rather harsh.

A : I think this, again, is based on misconception. Islam

lays down punishments which are harsh, but what is most significant is that the Islamic law of evidence is far more stringent than the Western, or the secular law of evidence. No doubt, the Islamic law says that if a thief is caught and proved guilty, his hand should be chopped off. Now, in order to prove him guilty, there have to be four witnesses of righteous character, who would say that they had seen him stealing with their own eyes. Anyone who gives false evidence is punished severely. The law of evidence is so comprehensive and rigid that it is practically impossible for a person to be punished until his guilt has been proved beyond the slightest shadow of doubt.

Q : Sir, if a court tries a case in, say, Karachi and the punishment is stoning, would you feel obliged to go ahead?

President : No; because there are certain institutional procedures that would have to be followed. From the Sessions Court, the case would go to the next higher court which is the Shariat Court, and from there, through the Federal Shariat Court, to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, which is the highest judicial authority in the country. So, you see that we have built into the laws a system of appeals, of checks and balances. That explains why so far there has been no stoning, and no chopping off of hands in Pakistan. The higher courts are there to ensure that the Islamic law of evidence and Islamic jurisprudence are observed in letter and spirit.

Interviewer : Thank you very much.

MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN

Michael T. Kaufman was the Chief of Bureau of the New York Times in New Delhi during 1979-82. He interviewed the President of Pakistan first on 23 September 1980 which the paper published on the 25th of September on the eve of the President's visit to New York to address the UN General Assembly. The following year, New York Times commissioned him to write a comprehensive article on Pakistan for the paper's mass-circulated SUNDAY Magazine (Circulation: 1.5 million). The centre-piece of this article was his wide-ranging interview with the President of Pakistan which was granted on 16 October 1981 and appeared in October 18th issue of the New York Times.

Kaufman has also represented the New York Times in Ottawa and Nairobi. While based in Nairobi, he was awarded in 1979 the George Polk Award for international reporting for his African coverage.

INTERVIEW TO MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN NEW YORK TIMES

16-10-1981

Interviewer: Could you tell me – could you record for me – when in 1947 you were coming to a new nation being born, that was going to be your nation, what were your feelings? Could you recapitulate those for me at that time?

President: Yes; they are as fresh today as they were at that time. I had joined the Army – the Indian Army of that time – and we fought in the jungles of Burma, the marshy areas of Malaysia, and the swamps of Indonesia. Then came the end of the Second World War, and I came back home to India to find a wholly changed atmosphere; the independence, which looked so far away before, was now in sight. Whereas, all along I felt inspired by the very thought of Pakistan, within the Army itself, we had no such feelings of being Muslim or non-Muslim. I was stationed close to Jhansi in Central India, far away from my own hometown, Jullundur, which was in East Punjab. My father had retired and my younger brothers and sisters were still studying at school when the family decided to make the new country as our homeland, and I opted for Pakistan. While I was on military duty in Central India, where there were some communal disturbances following the declaration of Independence, I asked the Army authorities about my family in Jullundur, and was told that military families were being well-looked after. But it was not true; and I

came to know later on that my family had been forced to leave the house and take shelter in a refugee camp in Jullundur, from where they – my mother, young children, and all – trekked on foot over 110 miles to Lahore, with just the clothes they were wearing. Meanwhile, I had started moving with the last train from Jhansi......

Q : You were taking the detachment of men.

A : Yes, I was bringing in the last detachment of men; it was one full train.

Q : What was the date ?

A : We left on 10th of December 1947, nearly three months after the independence, and it took us ten days to reach Lahore, a journey which should have been completed in about 18 hours.

Q : What were your views of your new home at that time? What did you hope for ?

A : I tell you frankly; I was looking for a utopia, not realising the travails through which a new nation was being born. From inside the train, I saw hundreds and thousands of corpses lying along the railway line – men, women and children who had been slain. Still I was hoping that I would enter a country that would be peaceful, where everything would be in abundance, and whose people would be disciplined, law-abiding, and imbued with the true Islamic spirit, because we had acquired this country in the name of Islam.

Q : May I jump to a presumption implicit in this trend of conversation? Pakistan has several times lost its way. Could we jump ahead now? Did you have thoughts of ever reaching your present position when you entered the new country?.

A : When I joined the Indian Army, I never expected to go beyond the rank of a Lieut-Colonel – the rank at which generally officers were honourably retired in those days. In Pakistan, when the chances opened up after I became a Lieut-Colonel, I could see myself, perhaps, one day as a Divisional Commander. Never in my wildest dreams had it occurred to me that I would go beyond that.

Q : This is where I'd like to get in. Could we do it a little chronologically? When you were called upon to take over what were your motivations and those of the people around you?

A : Yes, let's do it chronologically. During the general elections of 1977, there were allegations of large-scale rigging which were followed by mass agitation throughout the length and breadth of the country. At the Prime Minister's instructions, the Army was deployed, but the agitation was so deep-rooted and widespread that, in our meetings with him, during which I would always take a few senior officers – two or three corp commanders – with me, we urged him to order re-elections. He would not agree. This was early March. By the time it was June, the Army had killed at least four hundred people in a bid to maintain law and order; but people kept coming out on the streets by the hundreds, burning shops and

buildings, demanding the enforcement of Nizam-i-Mustafa – that is, a system of government in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). We – the Army – were receiving a spate of messages, some anonymous letters, telegrams, telephone calls, urging us to rise to the occasion, and taunting us for lack of guts. In many cases, army officers were being publicly abused for not being men enough. In these circumstances, I held a meeting in this very house with the Corp Commanders – this was on 20th June 1977 – and it was our unanimous decision that the Prime Minister should be advised to solve this problem politically, arriving at a compromise with the opposition parties, and ordering re-elections. If he accepts the advice, the Army should give him the maximum support; but, if he doesn't, then the Army should step in, in order to stop the bloodshed and what was virtually a civil war. I went to the Prime Minister alone, and told him of our decision. He said, he would see whether he could solve the problem politically. We gave him two weeks. On the 5th of July, we took over as a stop-gap measure, and I announced that elections would be held in 90 days.

Q : But when you said 90 days, you meant it!

A : I meant it as we had worked out the entire programme of elections. I said 90 days because the Election Commission told us that they would require at least 72 days for preparation. So I gave them a few days extra, and made it 90 days. It was then, that the political parties' representatives came to me and said they were not ready for the elections, and urged me

to postpone them. Thereupon, I told them to join the Government, and assist us in running the affairs of the country. That is how they came to be members of my Cabinet. These were the parties of the Pakistan National Alliance.......

Q : And the Bhutto party, you had excluded then?

A : Yes; we had excluded the People's Party, because it was this party that had brought the country to this pitch.

Q : Did you discover, now that you were in power – were you aware how deeply the rot had gone?

A : No; when we acted, we had no knowledge of the rot that had set in.

Q : Now what are some of the discoveries? I don't want to go into great details, because we don't have the time; but the rot had extended to – I mean it was more than just corruption?

A : There was nothing right. The coffers were empty; the paper money was in excess; the law and order agencies had packed up; the economy was in ruins; the crops had failed and there was shortage of wheat; it was free-for-all. This was the state of affairs.

Q : At that time you were acting as a collective or were you.... I mean when I first came here two years ago, the assumption was that you were the front man.

A : These were all rumours. It has all along been team

work. I must admit that I have been very fortunate; I have had the maximum of cooperation from the top-hierarchy – the Service Chiefs and the Corps Commanders – and from my civilian Cabinet colleagues.

Q : Forgive me for asking. Did there come a time when you feared for yourself or your family ?

A : Never. I am being very honest.

Q : I think what I would like to do here is, if we agree, to turn to the chronic problem of Pakistan's identity, domestically and in foreign relations. It is perhaps easier for me to understand the domestic aspect. But I am not clear as to where you are today in the comity of nations; you are with the Islamic countries; you are presumably pro-western; you are within the non-aligned; and, again, there is a problem of being everything to everyone; the definition is murky. Can you address yourself to how you see the destiny of Pakistan.

A : The answer to that question lies in Pakistan's geo-political situation. It is a country that is surrounded by big neighbours – Russia, China, Iran and India. It is thus self-evident that the best course for Pakistan is to work for developing friendly relations with its neighbours, while ensuring, at the same time, its security and integrity and freedom of action. Having experimented with CENTO, SEATO and other forms of alliance in the past, we opted finally for non-alignment. It is as non-aligned, Islamic State that Pakistan sees its role in the comity of nations.

Q : But in terms of identity, again. Are you part of the sub-continent? Are you part of the Gulf? Are you looking westward? Are you looking away from India? I know a lot of this belongs to area of collective subconscious.

A : No; we are quite clear in our minds. We are a Muslim country. We are not part of the Gulf, but we consider ourselves its backyard. We are a South Asian country that has its fraternal links with fellow-Muslim countries in South-West and South-East. We are members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, as well as of South Asian Regional Cooperation.

Q : I have visited India and I am aware of the way they regard you. It seems to me that their reasoning is: "We are a hegemonous power; not because we insist on it, but because we are larger, much in the way that the United States is a hegemonous power". So, it is not improbable that they'd think they also have the right of veto over some of the external affairs of their neighbours. But how much can one defer to a bigger neighbour, and still maintain one's dignity and control of one's sovereignty? I mean, it is a tricky question!

A : It is quite easy. We readily concede that India is a bigger country with much greater manpower and material resources; it must, therefore, play a larger role in the region. I have said all this time and again to the Indian leaders. At the same time, I had told them that, being bigger, they must demonstrate large-heartedness and not make issues of minor things. In fact, if India wishes it can treat countries in

the region by its magnanimity. But if the Indians think that they can browbeat us – 84 million people of Pakistan – into compromising our sovereignty, our security and dignity as a nation, then they are sadly mistaken. At the same time, Pakistan will persevere in its efforts to develop friendly relations with India. We have tried to convince the Indians that we have no intention nor the means, of having an arms race with them. Pakistan's offer of non-agression pact to India is sincere, but India has not responded positively to the offer so far; and this naturally tends to create doubts in our minds. However, if talks between India and Pakistan are held – and I hope they would be, comparatively soon – then the prevailing doubts can be dispelled.

Q : Now to turn to the domestic identity crisis. You have a cohesive country, self-sufficient in grain; you have economic opportunities; but you have also a history of sectarianism, regionalism and parochial skirmishes. I have no doubt of your sincerity and probity and commitment to your faith. But is Islam also being used as a tactical cohesion for a nation riven by narrow political or sectarian issues ?

A : No, Islam is not being used – or misused as your question seems to imply – for tactical reasons to bind the people of Pakistan together. Pakistan was created in the name of Islam for its people, to whatever region, province or sect they belonged, to lead their lives in accordance with the Islamic tenets, values and traditions. In other words, there was an ideological motivation behind the struggle for the achievement of Pakistan. It is, therefore, not quite right to call the

effort to sustain this motivation as tactical. If any thing, it is only logical that national cohesion be achieved through ideological means.

Q : We, in the west, have difficulty in understanding how a state, which is scientific, technological, forward looking, can be reconciled with an ideology that, in many respects, is backward looking – back to the period of the Prophet as the social ideal?

A : The difficulty arises out of a lack of understanding of the true spirit of Islam. Being the last religion, brought to mankind by God, by the last of the Prophets, through a Book which is the last word in perfection, Islam is for all times to come. If that be so, then it must cater also for the scientific era. Viewed objectively, Islam is not a backward-looking religion; it is a forward-looking religion. The Prophet exhorts us to seek knowledge and, if necessary, go to China in search of it. According to him, in search of an answer to a problem, look for what the Quran says about it; if you don't find it there, turn to what the Prophet, has said on the subject, if you still don't have the answer, then apply your own mind in the light of the Book of God. The learned amongst you should get together, analyse the problem, and find the answer in the context of your prevailing conditions. That is called *Ijtehad* – logical deduction by the learned and enlightened. In other words, Islam encourages the spirit of inquiry, and advises adaptability to the times so long as there is no deviation from the fundamentals of Islamic faith.

Q : One of the flaws of democracy is that we appoint

those who wish to be appointed, and who are not necessarily the learned or the enlightened. I gather you'd like the pious man, one known for probity and rectitude, to lead, to run the affairs of a state. Presumably, you came to the conclusion that politicians are not really suited to this kind of a role.

A : No, I have not reached any conclusion. What I have not been able to decide is as to how much of our present political system could conform to the Islamic values and principles. Islam has not given the actual blue-print of any particular form of government: but it has indicated the modalities, the means, and the norms of a just social order. It says that whenever deciding your affairs, you must consult one another; and amongst you the ablest is the one who is most pious, most truthful, most righteous. But Islam does not lay down the system for picking such men; and that is where the modern representative system has to be adapted to conform to the Islamic concept of consultation and consensus.

Q : But your intention is to return Pakistan to some kind of representative government, with the military's role reduced.

A : Yes; through elections in course of time, with the Army remaining in the background to act as a watchdog.

Q : As a permanent feature ?

A : As a constitutional requirement. I am convinced that, in Pakistan, one of the most stable institutions is the

Army – the Armed Forces. Its stability could be utilized to ensure the smooth functioning of representative institutions in the country.

Q : It is one of the dilemmas; one of the tragedies of Pakistan, that none of the other institutions – countervailing institutions have ever developed the same integrity that the Army has.

A : Therefore, we must develop those institutions, while giving them the strength and support from the background through the Army sources.

Q : Now, as I understand it, one such attempt is the local bodies, the idea is that you would create a patronage system, dependent or decentralised. I do not quite understand.

A : The local bodies, in our system, constitute the democratic base at the grass-roots level. Very briefly, the rural areas are divided into Union Councils, consisting of a group of villages, and the urban areas into Town Committees, Municipal Committees, Municipal Corporations, and so on. Elections are held to Union Councils, Committees, etc., on one-man-one-vote, adult franchise basis. The Union Councils grouped together elect their representatives to District Councils. The elected Chairmen of District Councils, Municipal Corporations, etc., constitute the Provincial Council. These local bodies generate their own resources, and also receive some government funds where necessary to develop their own areas, run their own affairs, and so on. Government functionaries are available to them for assistance and co-

ordination in developmental activities.

A : For the present, that is, as a stop-gap arrangement until general elections are held, I propose to have at the federal – national level – a Federal Council, which will be called Majlis-e-Shoora – the council that advises. This will comprise two hundred members who will be nominated by me on the basis of the advice I receive from the Governors, the local councillors, the District Administration, and from other reliable sources. There will be another one hundred and fifty members of the Federal Council who will be the elected representatives of over twenty professional groups, such as lawyers, educationists, doctors, scientists, agriculturists, labour, students, etc......

Q : Is there a religious component.......

A : There is no separate clergy as such. They will be somewhere among the two hundred nominated members. We have laid down certain qualifications for members of the Federal Council. They must have a clean record; they must not have been convicted of an offence of moral turpitude; they must enjoy a good reputation for piety; they must be considered as true representatives of their localities, they must believe in the Islamic ideology; and, finally, they must be practising Muslims to the best of their ability. Naturally, the last condition would not apply to non-Muslims.

Q : Is there a group of non-Muslims?

A : Yes, of course. There will be twenty seats reserved for non-Muslims, and twenty for women. These are additional seats.

Q : The question I have is on tactics. You are clearly a man of probity, and you are also a military man who knows when to fight and when not to fight, where to fight, where to withdraw and where to wait? Now, it seems to me you have used minimal force in dealing with the political parties. No one suggests that you are cruel. People are detained, but in reasonably comfortable circumstances. No one has been tortured. You have no Savak. You have been conciliatory. You have released the 6,000 people in Baluchistan. The tactics are to use the minimal force necessary to bring more and more people into the fold. But the PIA episode is the one I'd like to point to – not the hijackers – but the seventeen hundred people who were dismissed.

A : Not dismissed, retired.

Q : Everyone got a pension ?

A : Yes.

Q : That was for corruption. But there is systematic corruption in this country. Yet you have not wiped out all the rascals.

A : There are three things according to my Islamic belief. First, if you shed innocent human blood, you pay back with your own blood, secondly, you are not the judge of men, as there is somebody higher who is a

better judge than you, and that's God Almighty; and, thirdly, if you want to be respected, you must respect others. So, even if a man is corrupt, I would prefer to deal with him on his face value unless he is proved corrupt. This has been our consistent policy for the last four years; we have not taken anybody by the collar; we have not insulted anybody; we have not degraded any personality; we have not touched anybody's sister, or daughter, or female relative to demean him. We knew full well that the PIA had been corrupted; we knew that out of the twenty thousand employees, some ten thousand were surplus; we knew that a vast number of them had been employed in the PIA for other considerations than qualifications. But it was the then Administration that had enrolled them and given them jobs. So, we felt that since we were depriving them of their livelihood, we must be benign. I said it was much better to part with a golden handshake, then a kick in the back.

Q : But when men in the steel plant went on strike, you dealt with them differently.

A : Yes. They wanted a bonus. But I had already given them ten million rupees for their welfare. I had allowed them to use this amount, in any way they liked for the welfare of the workers and their families. I didn't see any justification for their demanding a bonus. They held out for two days and, realising I was firm, returned to work the third day.

Q : You have been in power four years as long as Jimmy Carter. Do you have a time-table ?

President : If everything goes well, and the way we are moving now, with the introduction of the Federal Council, the enhanced membership of the provincial councils, and the markedly improved economic outlook, we should be able to transfer power in course of time.

terviewer: Well, I thank you, you were more than kind, I have taken so much of your time.

RANJAN GUPTA

Ranjan Gupta is Delhi based correspondent of the Sydney Morning Herald (Australia) and NBC News (New York). Prior to this assignment he was based in Bhutan and later in Nepal as special correspondent of the Indian Express for six years.

Gupta visited Pakistan in 1981 and interviewed the President on 23 October 1981.

INTERVIEW TO
RANJAN GUPTA
SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

23-10-1981

Interviewer: You obviously have the Soviets at your border, and there are reports that there is more fighting in Afghanistan. There was a news-item, today, that the Soviet aircraft intruded into Pakistani airspace. Now, do you think that the Soviets could make a thrust like this in a bigger way?

President : With 90,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, which has in the past acted as a buffer for a long time, and the Wakhan salient now under Soviet occupation, the Soviets are virtually on our borders as you say. What is happening inside Afghanistan is not Pakistan's doing. On the one hand, the fiercely independent Afghans refuse to be subdued, and are waging a guerilla war; and, on the other, old men, women and children are leaving the country in the wake of military operations. Today, there are 2.4 million Afghan refugees on Pakistan's soil, and their number is on the increase.

So, to cover up what is happening inside Afghanistan, Pakistan is being made the scapegoat, and accused of interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. This violation of Pakistan's airspace is alleged to be in hot pursuit of the so-called intruders coming from Pakistan, which is not true; there are no incursions into Afghanistan from Pakistan soil.

Q : Were the Soviet aircraft flown by Soviets?

A : We think that these were Soviet aircraft flown by Afghan pilots, who seemed to converse in Persian. The aircraft had Afghan Air Force markings.

I would like to mention here that the Soviets have conveyed verbally to us that they would not violate Pakistan's security or integrity. We would, therefore, like to take their assurance on its face value. At the same time, we are maintaining our principled stand on the Afghanistan issue. We will not compromise on the four basic principles, namely, that the Soviet Union should withdraw its troops from Afghanistan; the Afghan refugees must return with honour and dignity to their hearth and home; Afghanistan's status as a non-aligned, Muslim state must be restored, it should be left to the people of Afghanistan to choose the form of government they like. At the same time, we accept that the Soviets are justified in wanting to have a friendly Afghanistan as their southern neighbour; but this does not give them the right to walk into Afghanistan, and claim that it is virtually theirs.

Q : Do you have a feeling in Pakistan that you are being encircled by the Soviet Union and India from two different sides?

A The reality is that, on the western borders, we have the Soviet Union which is virtually knocking at our door; and, on the eastern frontier, we have India who, despite our endeavours to explain to her that we are not in competition with her and that we want

friendly ties with her, has deployed the bulk of her troops in our direction. Once bitten, twice shy; we have had a taste of the collusion between the Soviet Union and India in 1971, which resulted in Pakistan's dismemberment. We have, therefore, reasons to be wary of both India and Russia.

Q : Sir, I had an occasion to interview Mrs. Gandhi just a month from today. She came up very strongly saying that the supply of arms by the Americans was the first step to get a base, or bases, in Pakistan, and that they wanted you to take the place of the Shah of Iran. What do you think of this assessment ?

A : I will answer this question with a counter-question. Has the supply of arms by the Soviets led to their getting a base or bases in India? If the answer is no, then what are the compulsions in the minds of the Indian Prime Minister that impel her to allege that, by purchasing arms from the United States of America – mind you, it is not a grant or aid; it is not even the concessional terms on which India has been able to procure arms from the Soviet Union; as I was saying, what makes the Indian Prime Minister think that by such a purchase from the United States of America, Pakistan will become an American base ?

Q : Sir, there is no indication that the Americans would want bases ?

A : No. They do not want bases, and we have not offered them any. You must have read U.S. Under Secretary of Security, Mr. James Buckley's testimony before the Congress. He was asked what's the *quid pro quo*

for the United States, and his reply was that, at the present moment, Pakistan occupied a very strategic position; that its being strong and stable would in itself be a guarantee of the stability of the region; and that this was far more important than a *quid pro quo* for the U.S. agreeing to an arms sales programme for Pakistan.

Q : Sir, there is a great deal of fear in India that Pakistan will use the F-16 and other recently acquired armaments against India. Now there have been three wars between these two countries. Can you give a guarantee that these arms will not be used against India? Why are the Indians so concerned about it ?

A : I think, there is a psychological reason, as well as a political objective behind India's profession of concern. Having reduced Pakistan in size in collusion with the Soviets, and with its enormous quantities of sophisticated weaponry, India has hardly any justification to have what you call "a great deal of fear".

We have a lot of outmoded, obsolescent equipment; our aircraft date back to 1954; we have F-86, which are now museum pieces; we have some Mirages, but they are also ten-years old; we have a few Chinese aircraft equivalent to MIG-17 and MIG-19, which are anything but modern. Now, let us see what India has. It has Jaguars, MIG-23s, MIG-25s, and MIG-27s – the latest Soviet version of the most advanced technology in aircraft. Mind you, India has all this at present; our programme is still for the future !

Then, what is the cause for Indian fears? What is

at the back of the Indian mind? To be candid, the Indians are afraid that if Pakistan acquires a bit of strength, they will not be able to browbeat it, or twist its arm that easily. For our part, we want to reassure India that we want to have good neighbourly relationship with it. In fact, when your Foreign Minister, Mr. Narsimha Rao, was here, I said to him that as proof of my sincerity in wanting to cultivate better relationship with India, I would show the Indian Government the exact inventory of all the military hardware Pakistan was buying from the United States of America. Isn't this an irony that it is a small country that is trying to reassure a big country? We have even offered a no-war pact to India..... What else can Pakistan do? All the gestures that Pakistan is making should have been coming from India, being a big neighbour with vast manpower and material resources.

Q: Another subject is that you are developing a nuclear bomb. What is the position?

A: It is sheer propaganda; a canard started by the zionist lobby and the other vested interests that Pakistan is manufacturing an Islamic bomb. Now, is the Russian bomb called a Communist bomb, or the Chinese bomb called a Communist bomb, or the Indian bomb a Hindu bomb, or the Western bomb, a Christian bomb, and the Israeli bomb, a zionist bomb? Why then, an Islamic bomb? The reason behind this is obviously to malign Pakistan and the Islamic world. All that Pakistan is trying to do is to acquire nuclear technology, because that is the only way we can meet our increasing requirements of energy. At present, we are

spending something like 1.6 billion dollars on the import of oil; this is roughly 50 per cent of our total export earnings. We have no option but to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Q : Sir, may I ask you a question on the internal situation? I have been here for the second time, and it is quite obvious that there is a great deal of stability in Pakistan. Are you going to have elections soon, or what is the position ?

A : In my opinion, there is no alternative to elections on the basis of adult franchise. There is no alternative to people's participation in running the affairs of the state. But Pakistan has not been as fortunate as India in this respect. India has had three generations of political leaders, and over 15 years of stable rule under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru after independence. We lost Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah hardly over a year after the birth of Pakistan, and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan three years later. Since then political governments have been coming and going in rapid succession, and Pakistan has never settled down to democratic norms. We have had three Martial Laws in the country. It is my conviction that Martial Law is no answer to Pakistan's problems, and that we must lay the foundations of stable representative institutions. When the Armed Forces intervened in July 1977, there was virtually a civil war in the country. Our objective is to transfer power to people's representatives, but we want to ensure that thereafter Martial Law will never, again, be required to be enforced. It is this military regime which has held local bodies elections after a lapse of fifteen years. We

have thus introduced democracy at the grass-roots level. We want to build upon this base, and work up to the national level step by step. Our next step is to set up a nominated Majlis-e-Shoora which, in English, means Advisory Council. This would consist of members from all over the country and some representing various professional bodies. Our ultimate objective, as I said before, is to transfer power to the people's representatives.

Q : Sir, one final question, please. There is a feeling that in this recent Melbourne Commonwealth Conference, more could have been done for Pakistan's readmission to the Commonwealth. Do you feel the same, Sir.

A : No; I think a lot had been done in Melbourne. Forty-one to forty-two members, except one, were practically unanimous in favour of Pakistan joining the Commonwealth. I am personally grateful to Prime Minister Fraser and his colleagues, and to other Prime Ministers – Mr. Trudeau, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, and her Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, Prime Minister Mugabe of Zimbabwe – and all others who supported Pakistan's readmission to the Commonwealth.

Q : One more question, Sir. Is there any forthcoming meeting between yourself and Mrs. Gandhi ?

President: Nothing scheduled as yet; but I will never hesitate to meet Madam Gandhi whenever the opportunity arises. However, I think that a meeting at the summit level must be productive and conducive to greater understanding and better relationship in the future,

and for that it is better if some spadework is done at the lower level first – some understanding is reached and certain positive decisions taken.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Sir.

LJUBISA JAKSIC

Ljubisa Jaksic, a graduate from the University of Sarajevo, has been serving the widely circulated Yugoslav daily 'Oslobodjenje' as Chief Editor since 1980. Earlier, he also worked with the Yugoslav News Agency, Tanjug, in 1966.

Jaksic who is both a journalist and a politician, visited Pakistan and interviewed the President on 28 October 1981.

INTERVIEW TO LJUBISA JAKSIC OSOLOBODJENJE OF YUGOSLAVIA

28-10-1981

Interviewer: Twenty years have elapsed since the First Conference of non-aligned countries was held in Belgrade. What is your opinion of the Non-Aligned Movement during the past years?

President: The Movement owes its origin to the efforts of newly independent developing countries which had no desire to take sides in the cold war and aspired for a new international order, based on equity and justice. Coupled with their opposition to military blocs was the realization that it was only through their united efforts that the countries of the Third World could hope to negotiate with the developed countries from a position of relative equality in international forums.

Over the years, the Non-Aligned Movement has become an influential and important forum. Its membership has been increasing and the scope of the Movement's activities has been broadened to include the economic problems of the developing countries.

Recent trends in the world situation highlight the importance and continued relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement. There has been a sharp increase in international tensions, which has resulted in increased dangers to world peace and security. Most disturbing is the fact that members of the Non-Aligned Movement have been subjected to

military intervention, directly or by proxy, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. This has threatened the independence and sovereignty of non-aligned countries. In the face of this situation, the Movement must firmly uphold its commitment to the fundamental principles of non-alignment.

I am happy to note that the Conference of Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries held in New Delhi earlier this year was able to resuscitate the true spirit of non-alignment. On the main issues which threaten international peace, namely, the tragedy of Palestine, foreign military intervention in Afghanistan and Kampuchea, and the situation in Southern Africa, the Non-Aligned Movement has pronounced itself clearly and unambiguously in accordance with its basic principles. There is a renewed resolve on the part of the non-aligned countries to uphold the immutable principles of nonaggression, non-intervention and non-use of force in international affairs.

Q : In that period, the Non-Aligned Movement has always dealt with the most vital issues of international relations. Which actions and which successes of non-aligned nations would you emphasize as the most important?

A : The most important achievement of the Non-Aligned Movement has been the creation of consciousness in the developing world of the need to strengthen their unity and solidarity in the face of pressures by big powers in the political and in the economic fields. The non-aligned countries have been in the vanguard

of political and economic struggles of the Third World countries. Their stand on political issues has always been based on the principles of peaceful co-existence, non-intervention in the internal affairs of states and preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries of the Third World. On the economic front, they have consistently taken decisions to promote the establishment of the New International Economic Order, based on justice and equity and the urgent need to restructure the existing system of international economic relations. However, the Movement cannot afford to rest on its laurels, and must continue its efforts in all fields to achieve its objectives.

Q: Present relations in the world are characterized by further tension between the blocs and further armament race, while in critical parts of the world there have been no signs of solving the conflicts. What is, in your opinion, the role of non-aligned nations with respect to these acute problems?

A: As the Non-Aligned Movement enters the third decade of its existence, it is faced with the threats and challenges of the contemporary era. The international situation continues to deteriorate. Prospects for peace are bleak and increasing recourse to force in international relations and violation of the sacrosanct principles of international law and behaviour, imperial international peace and security and menace the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the non-aligned nations.

Peoples all over the world are struggling against

the forces of oppression. In the Middle East, there is the issue of self-determination and nationhood for the people of Palestine and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied Arab territories, including the holy city of Jerusalem. The peoples of Southern Africa are fighting against the remaining vestiges of colonialism, racism and exploitation and the historic march of Namibia towards independence is still beset with obstacles. In South-East Asia, the plight of the people of Kampuchea has evoked the sympathy of mankind. Next door to us, the agony and travail of the brave people of Afghanistan moves us deeply. They are waging an unmatched struggle against overwhelming odds to preserve their faith, their culture, their nationhood, their independence and their non-aligned character. Their cause too is the cause of the Non-Aligned Movement, and we are confident that they will continue to enjoy the full support of the non-aligned world in their struggle.

The dangers confronting us demand an emphatic reaffirmation of the policy of independence from both power blocs. The non-aligned countries are allied neither to the East nor to the West. The strength and vitality of our Movement as a great bulwark of peace depends on its capacity to relate international events and developments to the principles of non-alignment and to defend these principles whenever they are violated.

Q : The Non-Aligned Movement is putting a great effort into building a new, more just International Economic Order. As a prominent statesman of a country bothered by economic problems, what is your

opinion of this part of the activity of non-aligned nations?

A : The struggle for a just and equitable economic and social order has progressively moved to the centre of global problems. Since the Sixth Non-Aligned Summit at Havana, the developing countries have seen a further deterioration in the international economic situation. Their terms of trade have declined, the aid climate has worsened and their debt burden has increased. The exports from the developing countries continue to be subjected to protectionist measures by the industrialized countries and their access to international financial market remains as difficult as ever.

In this sombre economic environment, the international community has not been able to devise answers to the problems faced by the developing countries. Negotiations for the establishment of the New International Economic Order are deadlocked. The actions of many developed countries have belied their professed adherence to the concepts of interdependence and the restructuring of economic relations, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. The consultations carried out in the United Nations for the launching of global negotiations have continued to founder on procedural issues and there is yet no progress towards tackling substantive issues. The New International Development Strategy adopted last year also has encountered reservations on the part of the major industrialized countries, as regards its goals, objectives and policy measures.

In these circumstances, the developing world needs to follow a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, we need to continue negotiations with the developed countries without compromising basic principles. On the other, we must increase cooperation among ourselves in all fields of economic activity. Collective self-reliance is the only reliable path to economic emancipation. Pakistan hopes that in the coming years, the Movement will become a powerful vehicle for economic and technical cooperation among developing countries and for promoting their solidarity in the efforts for restructuring the world economy. As a member of the Group of 77, we shall cooperate as always with other developing countries in their quest for the New International Economic Order.

Q : We have been witnessing, especially lately, conflicts even between some non-aligned countries. Would you kindly comment on them? Is it possible to build up mechanisms which would prevent further conflicts between non-aligned countries ?

A : The non-aligned countries subscribe to a wide range of political philosophies, which can result in their holding divergent views on a number of issues. Each country has its own perceptions but the most practical approach would be to eschew divisive actions and to strengthen the over-all unity of the Movement. Disputes and conflicts among members undermine the unity and solidarity of the Movement and provide an opportunity for outside interference in local disputes. Several proposals for peaceful settlement of disputes have, therefore, been under consideration of

the non-aligned countries. These include, *inter-alia,* the Yugoslav proposal for the establishment of informal *ad hoc* groups for providing good offices when the parties to disputes so request and Sri Lanka's proposal for the establishment of a Commission for the settlement of border disputes. Notwithstanding some divisive tendencies, it is a matter for satisfaction that the Non-Aligned Movement has so far managed largely to maintain its unity and can exercise a significant influence on world affairs.

Pakistan is opposed to the idea of the use of force or threat of use of force in the resolution of disputes among countries and it is for this reason that we welcome all proposals which provide an opportunity to solve problems in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law and the U.N. Charter. The principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Charter of the United Nations are a viable framework for the resolution of disputes between states.

Q : Your country is one of the most strategic parts of the world. What is your opinion of the possibilities to solve the present crisis? In that respect, what are the plans of your Government?

A : Pakistan is deeply conscious of the challenges that it faces because of its position on the world map. I assume that when you refer to the present crisis you are referring to the situation in Afghanistan. The situation in Afghanistan has grave regional and international implications. The Soviet occupation of

that country has created a serious situation. It has resulted in the intensification of super power rivalry in the region of the Indian Ocean and the Gulf.

Pakistan is committed to a peaceful political settlement of the problem of Afghanistan which would ensure the withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country, safeguard Afghanistan's independent and non-aligned status, permit its people to decide their own future free of foreign intervention or interference, and enable the Afghan refugees to return to their homes in safety and honour. This is a framework which has been endorsed by the Non-Aligned Movement as well as an overwhelming majority of the United Nations General Assembly.

We have consistently avoided interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. However, the influx into Pakistan of more than two million Afghan refugees who represent one-sixth of the entire population of Afghanistan, is a matter of direct concern to us. These refugees are victims of persecution and will not be persuaded to return to their homeland till the Soviet forces have withdrawn. Accordingly, Pakistan is exploring all avenues for finding a political solution to the problem. We are prepared to hold trilateral talks under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of representatives of Iran, Pakistan and PDPA. As you know we had also indicated our willingness to participate in an international conference of the kind suggested by the countries of EEC. We have agreed to talks through the Secretary-General of the U.N. or his Personal Representative.

However, the efforts of Pakistan alone cannot resolve the present crisis. The international community must continue to support a solution of this problem on the basis of the General Assembly resolutions. If the international community were to let the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan go unchallenged, there would be incalculable consequences for the weak and small countries of the world. It continues to be my hope that the Soviet Union will be persuaded to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan and to permit the people of Afghanistan to determine their own future free of coercion.

Q : The attempts at establishing better contacts with the neighbours have been noticed lately and that positively represents the contribution to efforts for preserving the peace in this part, that directly influences the peace in the world in general. In that respect, does your Government have any new ideas?

A : Pakistan has consistently followed a policy of peaceful co-existence with its neighbours. Having dealt with the issue of Afghanistan in answer to your previous question, I will briefly touch on Pakistan's relations with its other neighbours.

With China we have excellent relations based on mutual respect and understanding. That great country has provided much-needed assistance to Pakistan for which we are deeply grateful. Our ties with the People's Republic of China will continue to grow with the passage of time.

With India, we have consistently tried to im-

prove relations in all fields. As you are aware, recently we have proposed that India and Pakistan should enter into immediate consultations for mutual guarantees of non-aggression and non-use of force. We have also suggested to India on earlier occasions that the two countries should hold discussions with a view to mutual reduction of their armed forces. These efforts are being made within the framework of the Simla Agreement. We continue to hope that, despite impediments, our positive approaches to India will meet with a favourable response.

It is our belief that relations between States, irrespective of their size, must be based on the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs.

Q : It has not been long since Pakistan joined the Non-Aligned Movement, but its policies have been always close to the ideas of non-alignment, especially when economic problems were involved. What is your opinion of the present phase of struggle for the New International Economic Order and activity of "Group of 77" where all non-aligned countries are included ?

A : As you have stated it is only two years since I led the Pakistan delegation to the Havana Summit which welcomed Pakistan as a full-fledged member of the fraternity of non-aligned countries. However, even when Pakistan was not a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Pakistan's policies had reflected the ideals on which the Non-Aligned Movement is based, in all fields which are of vital concern to the developing countries, I do not have to recall that Pakistan

was in the forefront in sponsoring and organizing the historic Bandung Conference which proclaimed the principles of co-existence and paved the way for the Belgrade Summit.

In reply to one of your earlier questions, I have already expressed my views about the efforts of the non-aligned countries to bring about the establishment of the New International Economic Order. Even though success has so far eluded our grasp, I believe that the struggle for a just economic order must go on because the alternative would be a total breakdown of the present international system. There is every need, therefore, for members of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the "Group of 77" to forge unity in their ranks.

Q : Under your leadership Pakistan definitely left CENTO and joined the Non-Aligned Movement. It was an important decision which confirmed the possibility and opened the doors to those countries which had been the members of military alliances to join the Non-Aligned Movement when the conditions allow for it. What were the basic motives of the Pakistan Government in joining the Non-Aligned Movement?

A : It is a matter of satisfaction to me that the present Government in Pakistan took the decision to leave CENTO and join the Non-Aligned Movement. This was a decision in keeping with our abiding commitment to the principles of non-alignment. On all major political as well as economic issues, the position of Pakistan was always identical to the position adopted

by the Non-Aligned Movement. In the objective circumstances prevailing at the time, we felt that Pakistan would be in a better position to pursue the goals of its foreign policy within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The struggle of the Third World against inequality and injustice demands that they remain united and adhere to the principles of peaceful co-existence in their relations with one another as well as in the conduct of their relations with super powers.

Interviewer : What do you think of relations between Pakistan and Yugoslavia and the possibilities for their extension? What could be done, in your opinion, to improve them and make them more effective ?

President : Pakistan's relations with Yugoslavia are very cordial and the friendship between our two countries is based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Both Pakistan and Yugoslavia are active members of the Non-Aligned Movement. It was at the Non-Aligned Movement at Havana in September 1979 that I had an extremely cordial meeting with your great leader, the late President Tito. I particularly cherish the memories of my meeting with this outstanding statesman. When I went to Belgrade to be present at his funeral ceremonies, I had a valuable opportunity to meet your present leaders.

There is an identity of views between our two countries on all major international issues. Political contacts and close consultations between us take

place at regular intervals. As you may be aware, Dr. Fira, your Law Minister was recently in Pakistan and I believe his visit will further strengthen the existing friendly ties between our two countries.

We have also established a Joint Governmental Commission for Economic, Scientific, Technical and Educational Cooperation between Pakistan and Yugoslavia. The last meeting of this Commission was held in Belgrade in April this year which, we hope, will result in greater economic collaboration between our two countries. Frequent cultural contacts are also taking place. It is my earnest desire that our relations continue to grow to the mutual benefit of our two countries.

AJEET BHATA CHARIYA

Ajeet Bhata Chariya is an eminent Indian journalist. Presently, he is a free-lancer. Formerly, he was the Editor of English daily, Indian Express.

In October 1981, Bhata Chariya visited Pakistan as a government guest and interviewed the President. Incidently, he is a Stephanian and a contemporary of the President at the college.

INTERVIEW TO AJEET BHATA CHARIYA INDIAN JOURNALIST

30-10-1981

Interviewer: A new, unexpected development has taken place: a suggestion has come for a no-war pact from your side to which there has not been a very warm response from the Indian side. And yet when India had originally proposed a no-war pact, it was Pakistan that had rejected it as unpractical. Now, you are proposing it yourself. Why this change?

President: Let me trace the background in order to put this question in correct perspective. It was as a result of long deliberations and negotiations amongst the leaders of the two sides that India and Pakistan emerged as independent nations in their own right; and it was generally accepted that they would live as good neighbours. But what has happened since is that the two have fought three wars – the first in 1948 over Kashmir; the second in 1965; and the third in 1971. I will not go into who is to blame. The 1971 war, according to our Indian friends, cut Pakistan to size; but, according to us, Pakistan was dismembered through the collusion between India and the Soviet Union. After the last war, we entered into the Simla Agreement. Now, one of the clauses of the Simla Agreement is that the parties agree to the non-use of force. In other words, it is a form of no-war pact – an agreement not to resort to fighting in resolving any problems between us. So, all we are doing is to revive the spirit of the Simla Agreement by proposing a

no-war pact.

When I met Madam Gandhi in Salisbury at the independence celebrations of Zimbabwe in April 1980, I gathered the impression that she would welcome the idea of a no-war pact. I recall her telling me at this brief meeting, "General, we would like to see a strong and stable Pakistan". Yet the moment Pakistan decided to be a little strong, and started negotiating for the purchase of some American military hardware to replace its outmoded, outdated, obsolete equipment, there was a violent reaction from the Indian Government, and Madam Gandhi came out with the allegation that Pakistan would attack India with F-16 aircraft.

When your Foreign Minister, Mr. Narsimha Rao came here, I told him that we would show the Indians the inventory of what we were purchasing from the United States of America, in order to put their minds at rest. Mr. Rao appreciated my offer, and, before he left, he made a public statement that Pakistan had the right to acquire whatever arms it wanted. But, on returning to India, the moment there was a positive indication that the United States Government was prepared to sell some military equipment to Pakistan, Mr. Rao changed his stance, and joined Madam Gandhi in shouting that Pakistan would use F-16 against India. It is rather ironical that India, which is six times the size, ten times the population, three times the air force, four times the land forces, and several times the navy of Pakistan, should feel threatened by us. So, we thought that let us make a formal offer of a non-aggression pact to India, and conveyed

this in writing through the Indian Ambassador in Islamabad. We have not received any reply to our offer so far. However, in the meantime, we have just read the statement of Madam Gandhi, claiming that Pakistan cannot possibly use the newly-acquired U.S. military equipment against Afghanistan and the Russians, implying thereby that it will be used against India. By the same token, one could ask India whether the two hundred Mirage 2000 it is getting from France, and the MIGs 23, 25 and 27 it has acquired from the Soviet Union would be used against China, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, or against whom! But we have never once questioned what we regard as India's right – or for that matter any country's right – to acquire military hardware for itself. For our part, we wish India all the best, and desire to have good neighbourly relations with it. So, it is with those intentions that Pakistan has offered to India a hand of friendship – no-war pact, as envisaged in the Simla Agreement.

Q : The other matter that has been of some concern at home, in India, is that Pakistan is planning a nuclear test. The Western Press has come out with all kinds of stories about how Pakistan is collecting material secretly from various countries, and working definitely on a nuclear weapon programme. So, this is the matter I would like you to explain?

A : Yes; I will explain it to you. There are two aspects involved in it. One is the myth of Pakistan's nuclear programme as projected by the foreign media, and the other is Pakistan's nuclear capability, which is the reality. As regards the first let us look at the men-

tality of those who are trying to project Pakistan's nuclear programme. They call it the Islamic bomb. Now, is an American bomb called a Capitalist bomb, the Russian, a Communist bomb; the Indian, a Hindu bomb; the Israeli, a Zionist bomb? If not; then why an Islamic bomb? It is obviously a concerted campaign of the Jewish lobby, and of certain vested interests, to malign Pakistan, and the Islamic world.

As a developing country in dire need of meeting its growing energy requirements, Pakistan was offered a reactor by Canada in 1968; as a result of it the Karachi Nuclear Power Plant was built, which is inspected regularly by the International Atomic Energy Agency. In 1976, we entered into an agreement with France to supply us a reprocessing plant. But, thanks to the Jewish lobby and the bogey of Islamic bomb, America persuaded France to go back on its agreement with Pakistan, and, in course of time Canada also withdrew all further nuclear facilities to Pakistan.

So, when France and Canada let us down, we had two options left: either to abandon the nuclear programme altogether, and forget about our desperate energy needs; or to develop our own capability to acquire nuclear technology. There is plenty of natural uranium in the north-western regions of Pakistan. We, therefore, concentrated on production of enriched uranium, and are now able to produce it. But ours is a modest programme of nuclear technology for the peaceful purpose of generating energy; we do not have the capability – nor have we any intention – to produce a nuclear weapon.

Now, as regards the concern felt by India, which is already a member of the Nuclear Club, having exploded a bomb in 1974, we have proposed that, as a concrete measure of reassurance, let the two countries exchange their knowledge and experience of nuclear technology, and open each other's nuclear installations to mutual inspection.

Q : Inspection!

A : Yes: it is on record that, last year, we offered to India to sign a mutual Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and to inspect each other's nuclear facilities. Pakistan has been advocating at the United Nations that the South Asian region and the Indian Ocean area be declared a nuclear-free zone. So, if we were producing a bomb, do you think we would ask India to sign a mutual Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or to exchange visits to each other's nuclear plants, or we would have taken the initiative at the United Nations to have the Indian Ocean and South Asia declared as a nuclear-free zone? This is the reality. Yet the foreign media persist in their orchestrated campaign that Pakistan is about to explode a bomb – an Islamic bomb – and, unfortunately, India joins in the orchestra whenever it suits her.

Q : One of the things which I would like to ask is about your proposal for mutual reduction of forces. Has this also been turned down by India?

President: Well; it never got off the ground. This proposal was made by me through Sardar Swaran Singh when he came here. I asked him whether he thought it was

necessary for Pakistan to have a credible force for its defence. He said, "yes, certainly". Whereupon I suggested that let the military commanders of Pakistan and India get together and work out how much defence forces each country needed. I said to Sardar Swaran Singh that we would accept the Indian assessment. I suggested further that let the two countries tell each other where their forces are deployed. This would enable them to determine their respective role, and develop mutual trust and confidence as neighbours. It was in this context that I proposed the mutual reduction of arms. But there has been no response from India to this proposal.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

MICHAEL O'NEIL

Michael O'Neil, New Zealander by birth, is the Editor-in-Chief of the Asia Week. Prior to it, he worked for the Far Eastern Economic Review in 1974-75. He also served the Australian Associated Press in Sydney.

He was granted interview by the President of Pakistan on 12 November 1981.

INTERVIEW TO
MICHAEL O'NEIL
ASIA WEEK , HONGKONG

12-11-1981

Interviewer: You have indicated that the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan is a threat to the security of Pakistan. Do you seriously believe that the USSR would contemplate an invasion, or military action of any kind, against Pakistan?

President: There are two aspects of this issue – one political, and the other military. In political terms, the Russians have assured us that they will not attack Pakistan; that they will respect Pakistan's integrity and security. Living in this region, where Russia is now a dominant force, Pakistan has got to accept the Soviet assurance at its face value; in fact, it would be politically inexpedient to claim to disbelieve the intentions of a Super Power. However, a military mind is trained to go not by intentions, but by capabilities.

Q: Military intentions ?

A: No, military capabilities. If you would recall, one of the lessons of the 1973 Ramazan War, as spelled out by the Israelis, was that they made the mistake of going by the intentions of the Egyptians. They thought that Egypt never intended to attack across Suez; but they forgot to take into account its military capabilities, which had been developed by the Russians through both arms, and training. So, in

cold-blooded military logic, intentions do not count; it is the capability that counts. Having been bogged down in Afghanistan, the Soviets may take another step forward and that will be in our direction. We have already had experience of Soviet capabilities, when India, in collusion with the Russians, dismembered Pakistan in 1971.

Q: This is a terrible prospect. In South Asia, you can see India, on the diplomatic stage, adopting a position of understanding of the Soviet Union. There is a great feeling of betrayal among the ASEAN countries that India has recognised the Vietnamese-backed regime in Kampuchea. There is also a feeling that India would not be averse to a conflict with Pakistan right now; and that it would be one way of doing the Soviet Union a favour. Yet, clearly, there are no war preparations going on in Pakistan.

A: And you will find none in India for that matter; though there is plenty of war hysteria being worked up in that country. Fortunately we have not allowed this hysteria to spill over into Pakistan; nor are we giving India any chance to be provoked by any of our statements and actions. Our objective is very clear, Mr. O'Neil. It is to normalise our relations with India, primarily because we want to live as good neighbours with the Indians, and also because we have had, as I said earlier, the bitter experience of being dismembered in 1971 as a result of the collusion between the Soviet Union and India under pro-Soviet Mrs. Gandhi.

Q: We published a story several months ago that India was preparing for some aggressive action against

Pakistan as a *quid pro quo* for the Soviet Union. But shortly after that Morarji Desai confirmed that, during his period in office, the Russians were asking for it. Was this mentioned in the correspondence exchanged between you and Morarji Desai?

A : Mr. Desai did not mention anything about this; but it is now common knowledge that when he was in Moscow on a State visit, the Russians asked him to fix Pakistan, and he refused to oblige. We were not quite sure whether, given the same circumstances, Madame would have been unwilling to oblige the Russians! However, in our correspondence, and during my meeting with Mr. Morarji Desai, this question never came up. Later, when Mr. Morarji Desai was no longer Prime Minister, he himself mentioned it publicly.

Q : Morarji Desai, as I understand, was complaining about what might be some aggresssive intentions in Pakistan, and you told him you have no aggressive intentions and suggested some mutual force reduction.

A : With Mr. Morarji Desai we had a perfect understanding. The letters we exchanged were not on this particular subject, but on how to improve the relations between our two countries. I met him in Nairobi at the funeral of Kenyatta. Thereafter, we were in touch with each other, and I thought India and Pakistan were getting closer. It is still my effort to bring the two countries closer on a good neighbourly relationship.

Q : Do you think the Indians are playing a constructive

role in the Afghanistan problem?

A : Unfortunately not. I am sorry to say. I discussed this issue with Madame Gandhi when I met her at Zimbabwe's independence celebrations in Salisbury. This was only five months or so after the Russians had moved into Afghanistan. Whereas she acknowledged that what the Soviet Union had done was not in keeping with the norms of international behaviour, she advocated a soft approach to Russia, as it was a super power. She said that Pakistan should not shout too loudly, but use gentle persuasion with the Soviet Union. I asked her, "How do you persuade a super power gently, if you cannot convince it otherwise"? She said, "Well, keep persuading". I asked her, "Would you be kind enough to oblige Pakistan and persuade the Soviet Union?" Whereupon she said, "Why should I do it?"

Q : I understand that the Indians are paying for the Soviet arms in rupees, not using foreign exchange.

A : I am not quite sure about that; but I know this much that they have had the Soviet hardware, worth seven to eight billion dollars in world market, for only two billion dollars, and on very easy payment terms. I do not know whether the payment is in Indian rupees or in foreign exchange.

Q : Is Pakistan paying for its arms purchases from the United States in foreign exchange ?

A : Yes, Sir, hard-earned foreign exchange.

Q: Has this question ever been raised with the Americans?

A: No. We intentionally did not want any favour from the United States of America as far as the military assistance was concerned. We wanted a military sales relationship without any concessions, so that not a shadow of doubt could be cast on our status as a non-aligned country. They gave us a loan at commercial rates – 14 per cent interest – and asked for payment in dollars, and we agreed; we did not even raise the question of whether we could pay in Pakistani rupees.

Q: In your opinion what are the Soviet Union's long-term plans for Afghanistan? Do they have plans for using it as a spring board?

A: According to the Soviets, they came to Afghanistan in response to the call of a friend for help. Now, if you would please look at this map – here's Afghanistan, and this is the Soviet Union; and here are Tashkent, Samarkand, Bokhara, and so on, which were independent states at one time, and were annexed during the 19th century, the last of them in 1876. This is known as the soft underbelly of the Soviet Union. This is Iran, and you see Iran is now virtually encircled. This is Pakistan, and you see this wedge where it is coming; it's only two hundred miles. So, what has happened is that, with the occupation of Afghanistan, there is a possibility that the dream of Peter the Great for warm waters may come true.

Q : Is Pakistan providing any material support to the *Mujahideen*?

A : No. Please look at this map again. The insurgency is in this region, right inside Afghanistan; it is not along the border. In fact, the Soviets have got the areas along the border vacated. Kunhar valley, which you see here just opposite Peshawar, has been practically evacuated. So, there is no insurgency here; the insurgency, Mr. O'Neil, is right in the heart of Afghanistan, and more so in the areas bordering on the Soviet Union. This pipeline which is coming, as you see, from the Soviet territory, has been destroyed more than once. Now, how can you expect Pakistan to give enough elements – enough weapons – to the *Mujahideen* to fight right in the heart of Afghanistan? These *Mujahidden* are fighting with bamboos and sticks, with bazookas and muzzle-loaders of 1857 origin.

Q : How can they possibly win?

A : It is not always the weapon, but the man behind it that counts. And the man behind the gun in Afghanistan is the one who has never in history been subjugated by any foreigner. The British tried three times – they fought three Afghan Wars – and failed to subjugate Afghanistan. The third Afghan War was fought in 1919, when the British were the super power of that time.

Q : You would probably subscribe to the view that this is the Soviet Union's Vietnam? Is it that kind of thing? Would they get bogged down?

A : No. I do not subscribe to the view that Afghanistan is the Soviet Union's Vietnam. Let us compare the conditions that were prevailing in Vietnam with what is happening in Afghanistan. The North Vietnamese, under the dynamic leadership of Ho Chi-Minh, had at their back China and the Soviet Union and the moral, if not the material, support of a good number of the South Asian countries. Who is backing Afghanistan? Not a single country in terms of arms and logistic support. The *Mujahideen* are fighting virtually single-handed, and literally with bare hands. So, the prospects of Afghanistan becoming a Vietnam for the Russians are bleak.

Q : Don't you think the Islamic countries, as a whole, have a duty to do more for *Mujahideen* than they have done?

A : What can they do? Which Muslim country has arsenal to give to the *Mujahideen*? Some of them have money to offer; but where will the *Mujahideen* buy the weapons? Who will be prepared to sell them?

Q : There has not been any wholesale condemnation in any major Islamic Council.

A : One of the most severest condemnation was right here in Islamabad at the 11th Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference in 1980. I think it was the severest condemnation ever, for which Pakistan incurred the wrath of the Soviet Union.

Q : In what way is Pakistan helping *Mujahideen*?

A : I wish Pakistan was in a position to help. No, we are not offering any material help to the *Mujahideen.* However, Pakistan is helping the 2.5 million Afghan refugees; and, for every dollar that is being spent on them, 50 cents are contributed by Pakistan. We are paying something like 300 million dollars on just the subsistence we are able to provide to these Afghan refugees.

Q : Do you think the international community is doing enough on that score ?

A : Yes, indeed. Through you, I want to convey that we are very grateful to the international community for sharing our burden.

Q : Presumably, Pakistan is reconciled to the fact that those two-and-a-half million people aren't going to get home as long as the Russians are there ; and the Russians are going to be there for a fairly long time.

A : Yes. But there is that urge in all the refugees to go back. Perhaps, others in a similar situation would have said, "Well to hell with it; let us settle down in Pakistan." Not so the Afghans. Ask them whether they want to settle in Pakistan, and 99.9 per cent would say, "No we want to go back." You say, "How can I help you?" And the Afghan refugee would say, "Give me a weapon, so that I can pass it on to my young son or relative who is a *Mujahid.*"

Q : What are the conditions under which you would be prepared to talk with the Government of Afghanistan ?

A : We have put forward four conditions right from the first Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference of 1980. These are: one, Soviet troops must withdraw; two, status of Afghanistan as a non-aligned country and a Muslim state must be restored, three, Afghan refugees must return to their hearth and home with honour and dignity; and four, people of Afghanistan must have the freedom to choose Government they want. These are the four conditions.

Q : Your Government is unquestionably much more comfortable with the Reagan Administration. Has anything happened so far in Pakistan–US relations that would illustrate how much easier it is now to talk with the Americans than it was when Jimmy Carter was President?

A : I would say that Pakistan has always had good relations with the United States of America, including the period of the Carter Administration. This relationship is based on objective realities and, at times, is influenced by developments in this region. I think the Reagan Administration is a little more alive to the security problems of the region; to the radical changes that have taken place; to the effect of Soviet intrusion in Afghanistan with 90 thousand troops; to its future implications; and to the importance of Pakistan in this context.

Q : Does it bother you to any degree, Mr. President, that the Reagan Administration is blindly anti-Soviet, and that it might lead you into some kind of a difficult position?

A : We are not acting as proxy of the United States of America in this region; nor are we being propped up against the Soviet Union to serve American interests. No, none of that sort. The United States of America has agreed to help Pakistan with sales of arms, and some economic aid; but there is no *quid pro quo*, in the sense that they have not asked us, nor have we offered, anything in return, any bases or other facilities.

Q : Could we look again at India-Pakistan relations? The Foreign Minister said, after recent talks, that these relations have moved in a positive direction. The impression from South East Asia is that the opposite has happened, that the relations between Pakistan and India are getting cooler and cooler. What is your opinion, Mr. President.

A : I think that there has been a definite improvement in the relationship. In the last four years-and-a-half that I have been in office, there has been greater exchange of visitors between the two countries. Last year, half a million people have come and gone, whereas it used to be just a few thousand. We have been liberal in the visits of Hindu and Sikh pilgrims to their holy places in Pakistan. Pakistan wants greater trade relations with India because, in my opinion, the two countries can pull along together better if they have greater trade relations. You know that there is an International Fair in Delhi about to start on the 14th of this month; Pakistan is participating in it in a big way.

What I have been telling some of my Indian friends who come and see me — journalists among

them – is that if England and France, and if Germany and France, can settle their relationships after fighting each other for hundreds of years, why can't India and Pakistan have normal relations after having fought only three wars in the last thirty years? The Pakistan Government is exploring all possibilities of developing good neighbourly relations with India.

Q : Again, from an outsider's standpoint, there doesn't appear to be a reciprocal feeling in India.

A : Perhaps, your observation is valid. However, I find that in India, there is a lot of goodwill amongst the people, though some resistance at Governmental level. In Pakistan, you will find both the public and the Government wishing to have good relations with India.

Q : Who originated the no-war pact idea? Was it Pakistan ?

A : Yes, it was Pakistan's idea. In fact, we also proposed the balancing of mutual forces.

Q : Are you trying for a meeting with Mrs. Gandhi?

A : We have nothing on record; nothing is scheduled; but I have no hesitation; I am prepared to meet her as long as it can help improve the relations. But a meeting at the summit level must be productive; and, unless some homework has been done at the lower level and ground prepared for the summit, I think such a meeting will not have a positive result.

Q : I am going to ask you a million dollar question. Are you building a bomb ?

A : No, certainly not.

Q : If not, why not ?

A : We don't have the expertise for building a nuclear bomb. It is as simple as that! But, more importantly, we are trying to acquire a technology that can be used for peaceful purposes, to fill our enormous energy gap. It does not make sense that Pakistan should be building a bomb and, at the same time advocating a nuclear-free South Asian zone and Indian Ocean, and proposing to India to have a joint inspection of the two countries' nuclear facilities.

Q : When we talk about Pakistan as a bulwark against Soviet expansion, do you think that a Pakistan which is ruled by the Government of the present kind is a bigger bulwark, or a more important bulwark would be the one that is fully democratic? Let us say, we define democracy in terms of Islamic tenets.

A : The latter part of this question is more important that the former; because it is my belief that government in any country, as also in Pakistan, cannot be effective unless it has the direct support of the people of the country. If we have lasted for four-and-a-half years, Mr. O'Neil, believe it, the credit for it does not go to the military, but to the people of Pakistan. I may not be their elected representative, but unless I have the support of the people of Pakistan, this Government would not have been able to achieve

what it has in the last four-and-a-half years. As to being a bulwark against the Soivet Union, it depends on the degree of understanding and trust between the Government and the people, the prevailing security environment, and the support of international community. So, I think, that a democratically elected government, which has the people's confidence and support, will be able to act more effectively, more courageously and more decisively.

Q : Is there a feeling in Islamabad that Pakistan's relations with China are not as important as they were before, even though they may be strong.

A : No.

Q : Important to the Chinese, I mean.

A : Yes, Sir, they are important for both. While our relationship with China remains the cornerstone of our foreign policy, the Chinese have been very steadfast and responsive to our vital requirements. As regards their perception of our importance to them, I have not seen any change, in this respect, in the last four years in their attitude.

Q : Would you agree that China is still the main thing that weighs on India's mind ?

A : India is trying to play the China bogey, but having known the Chinese for so long and so closely, I can say that they have no designs against India. In fact, they want to improve their relationship with India; I know this for certain.

Q : Do you think the countries of ASEAN are doing enough for resolving the Kampuchean problem.

A : You know, ASEAN is a very effective organisation and, I think, it has played a very important role, according to its own capacity, for Kampuchea, as well as for Afghanistan.

Q : How are your relations with Bangladesh now?

A : Excellent.

Interviewer: Are you concerned about India-Bangladesh relationship?

President; Yes, to a certain extent. But, at the same time, we are confident of Bangladesh's capacity to retain its initiative and freedom, and to resolve its problems with India. I think it is in the interest of both to do so.

SERDAR DIMLI

Serdar Dimli, a graduate in Sociology from the Middle East Technical University, is presently a reporter of Turkish radio and television. Before joining the Turkish radio and television, he worked for the Ministry of Tourism and Information from 1978 to 1980.

Dimli visited Pakistan in 1981 as a member of the press team which accompanied President Kenan Evren. During this tour, he interviewed the President of Pakistan on 23 November 1981.

INTERVIEW TO
SERDAR DIMLI
TURKISH RADIO/TV CORRESPONDENT

23-11-1981

Interviewer: Mr. President, would you please elaborate on the present state of relations between Turkey and Pakistan, and what can be expected for the future of this relationship after the visit of General Kenan Evren, Head of State of Turkey?

President: Bilateral relations between countries are of different types. Certain countries develop their bilateral relations between people and people. In other countries, the Heads of State are very close to each other. And there are countries which have, along with the people, along with the Governments and Heads of State, a unifying spirit behind their relationship. I find that the relationship between Pakistan and Turkey falls in the last category. There is a unifying spirit between Turkey and Pakistan that goes back in history when Turkey was the leader of a great Muslim Empire. Even before Pakistan came into being, the hearts of the Muslims of the sub-continent used to throb with excitement on hearing the name of Kemal Ataturk. Since Pakistan came into being, it has enjoyed a wonderful relationship with Turkey. With President General Evren, as Head of State of Turkiye Cumhuriyeti, the two countries have come still closer together. I paid a visit to Turkey in January this year, and found that the love and affection which the people of Turkey have for Pakistan was enormous. Now, with General Evren's visit to Pakistan, you will

have found the people demonstrating similar sentiments for Turkey.

Q : What is the most important and urgent problem in this region where Pakistan is situated? What are your suggestions for the solution of these problems, and what role can Turkey play in resolving these ?

A : In my opinion, the most important event of the century—if I may call it that way—in this region is the foreign intervention in Afghanistan: the presence there of over ninety thousand Soviet troops. I call it the event of the century, because it is the first time in the Twentieth Century that the Soviet Union has expanded southwards. We are now the front-line state. The Soviet Union was otherwise not far from our borders: but now it is virtually at our doorstep. The Soviet Union is next-door to Turkey also; but I must admire the Government and the people of Turkey for the very forthright stand that they have taken on the Afghanistan issue.

As far as the solution of this problem is concerned, there is only one solution, that is a political one; because it is a political problem, for which there has to be a political solution. If you try and solve a political problem by any other means, then it will not be a lasting solution. I hope that through the good offices of the United Nations Secretary General, and with the moral support that Pakistan has received from 106 countries in the UN General Assembly, we will be able to find a political solution to the problem. I also hope that the Soviet Union, which is playing a very dominant role as a super power in the

world affairs, will rise to the occasion, and play a positive role in resolving this Afghanistan issue.

Q : What is the role of Turkey ?

President : As I said a while ago, Turkey has taken a forthright stand, and joined other nations in demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Turkey has generously volunteered to share our burden of Afghan refugees. We hope we will continue to enjoy the moral support of Turkey which we greatly value.

Interviewer : Thank you.

SALIM ATALAY

Salim Atalay is currently the Director foreign news in Anatolian News Agency. He joined Anatolian News Agency in 1980 and was given the reporting assignment.

Atalay visited Pakistan in 1981 as a member of the press team which accompanied the President Kenan Evren and interviewed the President of Pakistan on 23 November 1981.

INTERVIEW TO SALIM ATALAY ANATOLIA NEWS AGENCY

23-11-1981

Interviewer: Your Excellency, you had stated yesterday that the resources of Pakistan are also the resources of Turkey. Would you like to elaborate on this?

President: That statement was meant to highlight the depth of affection and regard in which Pakistan holds Turkey. It also underlines the extent to which Pakistan is prepared to go to demonstrate its brotherly relationship with Turkey. When I say that the resources of Pakistan are also the resources of Turkey, I mean that the eighty-four million people of Pakistan, over three hundred thousand square miles of Pakistan's territory, and whatever Pakistan has, are at the disposal of our brothers in Turkey. In other words, they should regard Pakistan's resources as their own.

Q: Today, international terrorism threatens not only the individuals, but also the stability of nations. And especially Turkish diplomats have become the target of this aggression. What is your opinion on this subject as the leader of a brother nation?

A: We condemn terrorism outright, whether it is at the internal, or the international level. International terrorism is being sponsored by agencies that do not want to see peace in the world, and seek to achieve their designs through chaos and violence. Such agencies ought to be identified, and exposed. We

must join hands with international bodies, the United Nations, in a concerted effort to uproot terrorism. Our sympathies are with all those who are victims of terrorism. I must take this opportunity to compliment the Turkish Government on having eliminated violence and terrorist acts within Turkey.

Q : Acts of terrorism generally are on Turkish diplomats outside, and what is your opinion on this?

President: I think it is an extremely cruel and dastardly act, and whosoever commits it must be condemned in no uncertain terms.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

INTERVIEW TO TURKISH JOURNALISTS

23-11-1981

Interviewer: Your Excellency, would you elaborate on the relationship between Pakistan and Turkey?

President: The relationship between Pakistan and Turkey is rooted in history, and nurtured by Islamic faith; it is strengthened by mutual respect and affection between the two peoples, and cemented by common perceptions and purposes in national and international affairs. There is now a growing realization that Turkey and Pakistan ought to devote as much attention to economic cooperation as they have so far given to the political sphere. As General Evren has rightly said today, if forty-five million people of Turkey and eighty-four million people of Pakistan join hands and supplement each other's efforts, they will prosper by leaps and bounds. We must, therefore, extend the scope of our complementary commercial and industrial joint ventures.

Q: His Excellency, how do you find General Evren as a leader, as a brother, as a friend?

A: I think, General Evren is one of the most exciting personalities I have met. I am not exaggerating. He is a very fine person; frank and forthright, simple, straightforward Muslim Turk. A Turk is known for his bravery, for his truthfulness, for his sincerity – that is what General Evren is. As a soldier-statesman, a four-star General of one of the best armies in the

world – he has all the qualities of an outstanding leader. What he has been able to do in this short while for Turkey is a source of inspiration for a lot many countries, particularly for Pakistan. I find in him a very good friend and an endearing person.

Q: Your Excellency, what do you find in Ataturk?

A: Kemal Ataturk was a valiant soldier, a great statesman, and a devout nationalist. A dynamic personality like him is born after centuries. Being a soldier and a student of history I have studied Ataturk's brilliant military campaigns and outstanding victories, his successful struggle for the liberation of Turkey against the Entente, and his historic role in the founding of modern Turkey. The hearts of people of Pakistan throb with excitement when they hear the name of Kemal Ataturk. He was, and will always remain, a source of inspiration, and admiration for us all.

Q: There is a lot of publicity in the West that Pakistan is going to explode an Islamic bomb. What is your comment, Excellency?

A: That is sheer propaganda. There are certain vested interests who are trying to malign Pakistan, primarily because we advocate Islam fervently and oppose vehemently the Jewish occupation of Palestinian territory. By calling it an Islamic bomb, they show their venom against Pakistan. I often tell my journalist friends and others that when America produced the atom bomb, nobody called it a Capitalist bomb; when the Russians exploded one, it was not called

Communist bomb; India exploded it, and it was not described as a Hindu bomb; Israel has got it, but they do not call it a Jewish bomb. Now, I ask, supposing Pakistan has it, why call it an Islamic bomb? You know, it shows their mentality that they do not want the Muslim countries to advance at all, and they consider that we Muslims are so irresponsible that if ever we have this toy in our hands, we will use it indiscriminately.

I must stress upon one thing. The developing countries have the right to acquire advanced technology. Nuclear technology is being utilised by the modern countries for peaceful purposes, such as for industry, medicine, transportation, etc. Why should we, in the developing countries – Pakistan, Turkey, and others – be denied the right to acquire this technology? That is why I have said that we are determined to acquire nuclear technology come what may; and once Pakistan has it, then it is for our Turkish brothers also. The resources of Pakistan are the resources of Turkey.

Q : Your Excellency! I would like to know your views on Iran.

A : Iran, in my opinion, is still in its revoluntionary phase that has not concluded. Our good wishes have always been with Iran and for her future. Iran, Pakistan and Turkey have been very close to each other in the various organisations, regional, as well as global. The tragic war between Iran and Iraq is a source of pain and agony to us all in the Muslim world. We have tried our best to persuade the two brotherly countries

to resolve their differences peacefully. I have been a member, like Prime Minister Bulend Ulusu, of the Peace Mission that has visited Iran and Iraq in an effort to bring them round to the negotiating table.

Q : Last week, Soviet planes crossed the frontiers and bombed certain places in Pakistan. Do you think there is any risk tomorrow for General Evren when he visits the Pak-Afghan border?

A : No, none whatsoever. The Afghans would never wish any harm to General Evren. If you would recall, Afghanistan has had very friendly relations with Turkey and Germany. These were the two countries with which Afghanistan had long associations. I was telling General Evren yesterday that there are only two countries in the world – Turkey and Afghanistan – which follow the custom, when presenting the guard of honour to a visiting dignitary, of the officer shouting *"Marhaba"* and the troops replying back. This is because Turkey had been providing instructors and other resources for the Afghan Army. The Turkish military tradition is still to be found in the Afghan Army. I am sure even the Afghan soldiers, who are on the border, would be saluting General Evren with great pride and respect.

Q : So, we will be seeing Afghan soldiers.

A : Yes, at the border. They just stand nextdoor, where you can literally shake hands with them.

Q : Your Excellency, I think, the next decade will bring a new problem for the Soviet Union, and also in a way

for Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, when there will be a majority population of Muslims in the Soviet Union. Do you think this new population factor will bring about a change in the Soviet attitude towards Islamic countries?

President Frankly speaking, I believe that Communism is a very unnatural phenomenon; it cannot last for ever. Islam is a *Deen-i-Fitrat;* it is a faith, a system given to man by God; it can, therefore, never go wrong. Our understanding can go wrong, but Islam just cannot. Communism is a philosophy created by man, and man can make mistakes; God cannot. So, in the ultimate analysis, communist philosophy will fail in the world, whether it takes seventy years, or it takes seven hundred years. On the other hand, Islam will rise and spread; and there is already a great resurgence of Islam. You know, ten years ago, people did not talk about Islam; they were reluctant to do so. Today people are saying their prayers more openly, and the younger generation is more appreciative of the values of Islam, and proud of being Muslims. There is similar Islamic resurgence taking place in the areas known as the southern underbelly of the Soviet Union. All these places, which were once world-famous seats of Islamic learning, have been physically subdued; but even Communism has not been able to uproot the Islamic spirit in them. One day they will come into their own. How long will that be? I cannot say, whether the next decade or the next century. One of the reasons for the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan may be to safeguard and isolate these southern regions from any Islamic influence from the direction of Iran or Pakistan.

Interviewer: Your Excellency, on behalf of myself and on behalf of Turkish journalists, I really thank you very much.

EMILY MACFARQUHAR

Emily MacFarquhar is one of the well-known journalists working for the Economist London. She is now posted in the Washington Office of the Economist.

She visited Pakistan in 1981 and interviewed the President of Pakistan on 29 November 1981.

INTERVIEW TO EMILY MACFARQUHAR ECONOMIST, LONDON

29-11-1981

Interviewer: The American aid package that is being offered to you now is quite different from the one you rejected in April 1980; yet people still say what good is this equipment for Pakistan, especially F-16, for defence against the Russians and the Indians. So, what do you think the package will do for Pakistan?

President: People forget that every nation must think of its security and seek to guard its territorial integrity to the best of its capacity and resources. Pakistan is, no doubt, a comparatively small country in relation to Russia and India, but it does not mean that it should not develop its capability to defend itself as best as it can. What the United States of America has offered to sell us will enable Pakistan to update its obsolescent equipment.

Q: What do you think is the American interest in defending Pakistan?

A: I think it is the mutuality of interest. It is the common perception of the prevailing situation. Pakistan is located in a region which, at the present moment, has acquired an even greater importance than before, and it is in the interest of the United States of America to see that Pakistan remains stable, non-aligned, and a member of the Muslim bloc. The US military sales programme and economic assistance will enable

Pakistan to be in a much stronger position to put up a reasonably sustained resistance against any intruder from across its western borders.

Q : But does that mean that you don't expect the Americans to come in with weapons, or with men, if Pakistan should be attacked by any outsider ?

A : No, we don't expect the Americans to come to our defence. It is my firm belief that if a nation of 84 million people cannot defend itself, no other power can hope to defend it. We believe on relying on ourselves – every man, woman and child of Pakistan – to defend our sacred soil against aggression.

Q : So, America's security commitment begins and ends with this aid package.

A : Yes.

Q : Are you concerned about the recent Congressional moves aimed at cutting off aid if Pakistan explodes a nuclear device ?

A : No, we are not concerned at all, because our track record is clean. We have initiated the UN move to declare the Indian Ocean a nuclear-free zone; we have advocated that non-nuclear nations be given protection against nuclear threats; we have offered to India a reciprocal arrangement for the inspection of each other's nuclear facilities. With all this, there is no reason for us to believe that the U.S. Congress will place any restrictions on the aid package. We have time and again, stressed that Pakistan has neither the

intention, nor the capability, to explode a nuclear device.

Q : Do you see any change over the last two years in the threats to Pakistan's security ?

A : When you talk of a change, I would say that the perceptions of the threats are a little more clear than what they were two years ago. Pakistan still stands threatened from across both its eastern and western borders. However, compared to two years ago, it faces a much greater threat from the west. When the Soviets had moved in, they were expecting to consolidate their position in Afghanistan before long. But they have met a fierce resistance from within the country, and are engaged in prolonged warfare with the local freedom-fighters, the *Mujahideen*. It seems that they are now contemplating a much longer stay in Afghanistan than expected previously.

Q : What do you mean by a much longer stay ?

A : The Soviets say that they will withdraw only when certain conditions are fulfilled, which include non-intervention in Afghanistan from outside. There is certainly no intervention from our side. It is self-evident that the resistance is from inside and not outside Afghanistan. The fiercely independent Afghans have never accepted foreign domination. The people of Afghanistan have also not accepted the present regime imposed on them by the Soviets. So, it is unlikely that the Soviet conditions for withdrawal will be fulfilled that easily; hence their stay will be for a much longer period.

Q : Is there any point then in sitting down for negotiations with the Afghans?

A : Yes. There are two ways of resolving the Afghanistan problem; one is military, the other political. A military solution is beyond our means. So, we must seek a political solution. This implies continued talks and negotiations.

Q : What do you think the Russians' intentions are towards Pakistan? Do you think that, after Afghanistan, Pakistan is next?

A : The Russians say they have no designs against Pakistan. We must accept their statement at its face value. But then we also expect that the Soviets will create the conditions in Afghanistan which would lead to a solution of the problem, and thereby put our minds at rest in regard to Pakistan's security environment.

Q : Most Pakistanis I talked to think that there is no threat of a direct Soviet attack on Pakistan; but they talk about the possibility of nibbling at the borders. I just heard that the Soviet arms were found recently in tribal areas of Pakistan, which people think may be intended to be funnelled deeper into Pakistan, and create trouble. Do you sense that there is a danger of Soviet-supported insurgency?

A : Soviet arms are available on our side, not because they have been funnelled, but because these have been brought in by the Afghan soldiers who have defected. Then there are the freedom-fighters –

Mujahideen who capture Soviet weapons while fighting in Afghanistan, and they sometimes come to our tribal side over which we have no control. Within the tribal belt there are areas which are inaccessible to our military or para-military force. When the freedom-fighters come and take refuge on our tribal side, the possibility of not only nibbling at the borders, but also of a limited, hot-pursuit type of operation cannot be ruled out.

Q : What about Soviet-supported subversion inside Pakistan ?

A : Yes, we have good evidence of that; but then subversion is the accepted communist technique that the Soviets have pursued throughout the world, and Pakistan is no exception. I think this type of Soviet activity continues in the United Kingdom as well, and perhaps to a considerable extent.

Q : Do you think Soviet-supported subversion is behind the Al-Zulfiqar Movement?

A : I don't know about the Russians; but the base of Al-Zulfiqar is in Kabul, and from there they are financed, armed and given various instructions. Who gives the instructions in Kabul is anybody's guess !

Q : Are they a threat to you ?

A : No, not exactly. They are more of a nuisance. Look at this madman who tried to shoot President Reagan. Now, you cannot say that the American regime is unstable, or the people are ready to rise against it, and

yet one odd man's act could have done incalculable harm. Take President Saadat for that matter. His tragic death at the hands of those who killed him has not led to the collapse of Egypt or a complete change in Government policies. It is in this sense that organisations like Al-Zulfiqar are a nuisance.

Q : Do you think they are linked with the Pakistan People's Party ?

A : Some of the elements who have been caught were PPP workers and supporters.

Q : What is it that makes it impossible to hold elections in Pakistan at the moment? You said the other day that you are not holding elections.

A : Not in the near future.

Q : Then, when ?

A : We have a programme; we will start with an Advisory Council which, I hope, will be functioning next time when you are here. Then, through that process, we will allow a certain degree of political activity that can help strengthen those parties which can bring some sanity in politics.

Q : And how are these parties going to strengthen themselves if the proposed Advisory Council will be a non-party body ?

A : Yes, this is going to be a non-party body.

Q : So, how can these parties have an opportunity to develop?

A : There will be some 350 members of the Advisory Council. Although they will be selected on non-party basis and purely on individual merit, they are bound to have some association, affiliation, or sympathy with one political party or the other. Once they meet as a national forum, representing a cross-section of public opinion, they may be able to play an important role in paving the way for the revival of political activity in course of time, and opening up the possibility of initiating the process of elections.

Q : This is a very long-term plan.

A : No, it will not take that long.

Q : The next issue that comes to one's mind about this region is your relationship with India. Only very recently you were dismissing the idea of a no-war pact. You said it was unnecessary; and now you are offering India a no-war pact. Why have you changed your mind?

A : To create more confidence in India. We want to live as good neighbours; and even if the initiative comes from Pakistan – although we expect it from India, being a much bigger country – we feel that it would help in creating a peaceful atmosphere between the two countries, which we very much wish to achieve.

Q : What is the content of the pact?

A : We have said that disputes between the two countries should be resolved not by means of arms, but through peaceful negotiations.

Q : Does not the Simla Agreement say this ?

A : Yes, it says so.

Q : So, are you going beyond Simla, or you are merely reaffirming it ?

A : We are reaffirming Simla, and also going a little beyond it in the sense that we have offered to sit down and see how best the two neighbours, who have fought three wars, can live in peace. Let us talk about peace, rather than issue statements on how each side is arming itself. If the Indian authorities feel, as they loudly proclaim, that with this purchase of a few arms from the United States of America, Pakistan has become a serious threat to Indian security, then here is our offer, in categorical terms, of a non-aggression pact.

Q : Now the Indians are asking, what are the implications in your no-war offer for Kashmir? Have you suggested that the Kashmir issue should be settled first ?

A : I was just reading a paper – I did not know that you were going to ask me this question – I think it is quite clearly stated in this paper that Mr. Shahi categorically denied that Pakistan's offer was a contradiction of its 1951 position that a no-war pact should follow the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. As far as Kashmir is concerned, it remains a dispute

between India and Pakistan, and we have no intention of compromising on Kashmir; but let us resolve even this issue through negotiations, and not through use of force.

Q: But are you saying that Kashmir must be settled first?

A: No, this is the difference. We say let us talk first, and work out how we can live in peace as good neighbours, and also, in course of the talks, see how best we can solve the Kashmir issue peacefully.

Q: Some Indians asked me to ask you this question. "What should we do to give you the confidence to live with us without seeking security from outside?" What will you ask me to convey to them ?

A: You just tell them: "Please ask yourself the same question, as to what Pakistan can do to allay your fears about Pakistan having any aggressive designs against India?" They should be giving me the answer rather than asking this question of me.

Q: I have to take the answer back with me. So, what can I talk to them ?

A: When you go back to India, tell them that you asked me this question, I asked you a counter-question as to what should Pakistan do to allay Indian fears? Pakistan, a small, tiny, little country, with one-tenth of India's population, one-sixth of India's Armed Forces, with hardly any indigenous defence production capability compared to India's enormous capacity; now how can Pakistan be a threat to India? You

see, all this no-war pact business started when we heard noises from across the border that Pakistan's effort to acquire a few weapons from the United States of America to safeguard its own territorial integrity, was a threat to the security of India. It was at this stage that we said, "All right, if you feel threatened, let the initiative be from Pakistan, and let us have the honour of offering you a no-war pact to allay your fears."

Q : Are there any other concrete measures you would suggest for reducing tension with India?

A : A no-war pact is concrete enough. It is in the interest of both India and Pakistan to reduce the tension, and live as good neighbours; to give up old stance of adversaries, and pursue policies of peace. I am very sincere about this. You can see that it has been the central point of my policies vis-a-vis India for the last four years.

Q : Do you suspect that there is any collaboration between India and Russia in putting pressure on Pakistan?

A : The Soviet Union tried, as you know, with Mrs. Gandhi's predecessor, Mr. Morarji Desai, to pressurise Pakistan; but he refused. Madam Gandhi has her views on Afghanistan; but she is not coming out with them. In her heart of hearts, she realises that what has happened in Afghanistan is not right; but she is not prepared to condemn the Soviets; meanwhile, she is wholeheartedly supporting them on the Kampuchean issue.

Q : Can you give me your priorities for the next few years – what you would hope to accomplish ?

A : On top of my list is Islamisation. Pakistan, like Israel, is an ideological state. You take Judaism from Israel, it will fall like a house of cards. You take Islam out of Pakistan, and make it a secular state, it will collapse. Pakistan was carved out of the sub-continent for the specific purpose of enabling its citizens to lead their lives in accordance with the tenets of Islam. Unfortunately, this objective had been ignored, and almost relegated into oblivion, by successive governments for over thirty-five years since Pakistan came into being. It is for the last four years that we have been trying to bring about Islamic values in the country, and this is not because Zia-ul-Haq wishes to; it is what the people of Pakistan fervently desire. We would not have lasted for four months if we were not acting in accordance with the aspirations of the people of Pakistan. So, on the top of my list is the Islamisation of society in Pakistan. My next priority is to eradicate illiteracy, and give the country a good educational system. Next comes public welfare. Seventy per cent of our people, living in rural areas, are devoid of such basic necessities as clean drinking water, life-saving medicines, and the like. We want to lay the foundations of an Islamic welfare state in which justice – Islamic justice – is available to its citizens at their doorsteps.

Q : And do you see yourself to be able to do this, and in what kind of circumstances ?

A : Well, I am doing my best to achieve this objective

and, at the same time, to prepare the ground for a peaceful transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people.

Q : Selected or elected !

President : Selected now, and elected eventually.

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

NIKHEL CHAKAR WARTI

Nikhel Chakar Warti is a mature and respected Indian journalist. He is the Editor of independent Indian English weekly Mainstream, published from New Delhi.

Chakar Warti believes in peace between India and Pakistan. He is fair and profound in his reporting and analysis of issues affecting India and Pakistan. He visited Pakistan in 1981 and interviewed the President on 12 December 1981.

INTERVIEW TO NIKHEL CHAKAR WARTI INDIAN JOURNALIST

12-12-1981

Interviewer: What do you consider is the main impediment to holding of elections?

President: In one word – politics! You see, politics in Pakistan has a different connotation from that in India. Whereas India has had three generations of politicians, and continuity of leadership over decades, after the death of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the assassination of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan has had three Martial Laws, and succession of political leaders, most of whom were more concerned with consolidating their power than with safeguarding the interests of the country and promoting the welfare of its people. I must admit that I had no idea of the state of politics in the country until I was confronted with the national crisis in 1977. It shows how little I knew of the A.B.C. of politics, when I thought I would clear the whole mess in 90 days; hold general elections; and hand the reins of government back to the representatives of the people.

Q: Yes, you mentioned it.

A: But when I found what a mess we were in, I put off the elections, and invited the Pakistan National Alliance, whose nation-wide agitation had led to the ouster of Mr. Bhutto, to help me run the government.

So, the PNA nominees joined my Cabinet until I announced that I would hold general elections in 1979. I had told them that they would have to leave at least a couple of months before the elections were scheduled. I would not like to go into the details of what followed, but the PNA nominees packed up, and I asked the Chief Election Commissioner to plan for elections in October, 1979. At this stage, several politicians came to me and urged that the elections should be postponed indefinitely, while some of the political parties refused to conform to the terms and conditions set by the Election Commission, such as registration of a party, and rendering of its accounts and source of income.

Now, the whole agitation – the 1977 Movement – against Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was not only due to rigging of elections, its main demand was the enforcement of Islamic system, that is, Pakistan should be governed strictly according to the tenets and principles of Islam. So, coming back to your question regarding the impediments to holding of elections: in a purely Islamic system there is no provision for holding of elections. According to Islam, people should elect one individual from among them as their *Amir,* who is the most pious, honest; and a believer, as was the practice in the days of the first four Caliphs.

Q: The question of Islamisation, and running the modern state, how do you adjust it ?

A: Islam lays down principles, and it is for us to determine how to run a modern state within those basic

principles. For example, Islam does not say whether there should be a Presidential, or a Parliamentary form of government. As long as the people's participation is ensured, the form of government, from the Islamic point of view, is not important; and yet the practice has been to choose one person – a *Khalifa*, Caliph – and to pledge allegiance to him for the whole life, provided he does not deviate from the path of righteousness.

Q: Pakistan's geo-political position today is perhaps unique in the world – faced by three powers of different strength and attitude. They are Russia, China, and India; not that they are all against you, but how do you distinguish one from the other in your dealings?

A: Pakistan is conscious of its strategic position, and is thus all the more keen to pursue a policy of co-existence. So, with the Soviet Union, we are trying to follow this policy, so long as we do not have to compromise on principles. We are not concerned with what ideology the other countries follow. Russia is a communist country, so is China. Yet our relations with China are deeper and stronger than with Russia. In fact, China is the main pillar of our foreign policy. With the Soviet Union, we are trying our best to work out a policy of co-existence.

As regards India, it is our earnest desire to establish good neighbourly relations with her. My policy is to extend a firm hand of friendship to India, because I feel that if England and France, after fighting a hundred year war, and Germany and

France being at daggers drawn for centuries, could become friends and partners in commerce and defence, there is no reason why Pakistan and India cannot live as good neighbours.

Q : But don't you think that the perception may not be the reality? You may have the feeling that India is linked too much with the Soviet Union, and India may feel similarly about Pakistan and the United States of America.

A : But that has nothing to do with wanting to develop good neighbourly relation. Look at France, for example. The French do not allow the NATO Headquarters to be established on French soil. They go and fraternize with the Soviet Units. But, when it comes to the question of Afghanistan, they are as much critical of the Soviet military intervention as anybody else in the West. So, India's affiliations with the Soviet Union should not stand in the way of our internal or regional affairs. We do not question India's massive purchases, at give away prices, the sophisticated Soviet arms; there is no reason why India should object to Pakistan acquiring some military hardware, at prevailing high market rates from the USA.

Q : You have offered a no-war pact. Some sections in India and I myself feel that, in a sense, it is a big relief, even though the Indian Government may appear to be hesitant. Why did you offer the no-war pact when you didn't agree to it earlier?

A : I will place before you my track record. When Sardar

Swaran Singh came here in 1979, I suggested that India and Pakistan should sit across the table and decide about the quantum of arms Pakistan should have for her defence and security. I said to him: "Sardar Sahib, put your hand on your heart and tell me whether Pakistan has the right to make self-defence arrangements or not." Sardar Swaran said, "Yes, it has." Whereupon I suggested that let us get together and work out what was the legitimate military hardware Pakistan required for self-defence.

Q : This I can quote ?

President . Yes, certainly. A year or so later, we had Mr. Narsimha Rao with us and I offered to let India know what arms we were having from the United States of America if that would reassure India that we had no aggressive designs, and all that we wanted was to replace our obsolescent equipment purely for our security. Nevertheless, regrettably, we found that India started building up a war psychosis, claiming that American arms to Pakistan posed a threat to Indian security. It was at this stage, that I decided to take the next big step – that is, to offer a no-war pact to India.

Interviewer: I don't have to tell you, Mr. President; but to all the political opponents of your regime here, whom I met, I put bluntly the question: "Suppose India makes a positive response to the no-war pact offer, would it be to your disadvantage; won't you think that the present regime is getting the credit for it?" They said: "No, certainly not." With that, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me so much of your time.

INDEX

کتابخانہ محمد ہارون موسیٰ

Published by
Directorate of Films & Publications
Ministry of Information & Broadcasting
Government of Pakistan
Islamabad

Printed at
Barqsons Printers Limited, Islamabad
Phone: 822811